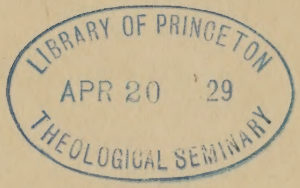

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An Explanation of Christian Theology for English Catholics

BY

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PREFACE

THE age in which we live is intensely alive and intensely critical. Both characteristics are very obvious in the religious sphere, and while many people can, fortunately, keep up a vigorous religious life which is based on a very simple faith, there are others whose critical faculties will not be denied. It is to try to help such people that this book has been written. It is meant for lay people of education but scant leisure. To some, perhaps, slight as it is, it will give as much insight into a complex study as they desire. Others, it may be hoped, will be led on to read works of real importance by the many able theologians of our time.

It is difficult indeed to avoid religious discussion and even controversy, but it is impossible to engage in it without disaster unless we have some slight acquaintance with theology. This little book is in no sense a theological primer, but it may perhaps serve the purpose of suggesting a point of view from which to approach religious questions. The principal danger of such questions is that of setting out

to discuss the superstructure before we have given any serious thought to the foundations.

These foundations must be laid in theology. But dogmatic theology has dangers of its own. A merely intellectual religion is sterile. It is for this reason, and as an introduction to ascetic theology, that the final chapter, on Prayer, has been added to the book.

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The Faith of the Church

CHAPTER I

GOD

WHAT does a Christian mean when he speaks or thinks about 'God'? To some the question may sound over-ambitious or wellnigh profane. It will seem to herald either a pretentious philosophical inquiry, only too likely to end in mist, or else a sacrilegious attempt to define the incomprehensible. They have a deep distrust of all this kind of thing, as damaging to faith and ministering to intellectual conceit. To others it may appear mere solemn trifling, a spinning of words to no useful purpose, since in fact we all know quite well what we mean : 'God' has the richness of a proper name, and we only dilute its content when we try to describe its meaning.

But all the same the question needs answering ; for the practice of religion does, in fact, depend on the idea that lies at the centre of it : it depends, that is, partly on the meaning we assign to the word 'God,' and partly on our personal reaction to that meaning when it has

been apprehended. It is assumed that this great idea has the same meaning for every one : yet nothing could be more obvious than the surprisingly different behaviour of apparently similar men and women in its presence. One hates it, another despises it, another patronizes it, another finds it useful, another fears it, another loves it. Is it really possible that they all mean the same thing ? And if not, then is it not perhaps true that a clearer apprehension of the Christian idea of God would do much to unite the enthusiasms of all who have the capacity of loving the highest when once they have seen it ?

Consider the facts. Among educated men there are those who would claim to be Christians apparently on the ground that while they are not on the one hand materialists, neither on the other are they Jews, Mohammedans, idolaters, nor anything positive or downright like that ; they are just—' Christians.' They believe in God : they reverence Jesus of Nazareth : they may have a considerable amount of the characteristically Christian 'enthusiasm for humanity'; but this enthusiasm is certainly not evoked by any clear apprehension of the character of the Christian God, and they would never claim that any positive idea of God made much difference to their lives. Therefore it is the less surprising that other men, apparently much the same kind of people, are inclined to denounce Christianity as a superstition. It is merely that

these have a more positive idea of what it means (though not necessarily a truer one) than the former class, and they are not attracted by it. They too believe in God ; but they realize that their idea of God is something very different from ' the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Yet all the time in every generation there are those who find the very light and inspiration of their souls in the actual concrete Christian idea of a God Who has to some extent revealed Himself. God, they claim, is known to them ; very dimly and faintly perhaps; yet the knowledge is real, so far as it goes ; and they are confident enough about it to make it the actual guide of their lives. God is real to them. They will differ enormously in the way in which they seem to have attained the knowledge of Him. Some will ascribe it to the Bible in general, some to the Gospels, some to the Sacraments, some perhaps to the teaching of the Church, or of some particular teacher in the Church. Others, again, will say that God has made Himself known to them in prayer, others in the circumstances and providences of life, others in a wide view of human history as a whole. But they will all agree in this, that it is through *Christ* that God has been made known.

It seems, indeed, that there are many ways of arriving at a valid idea of God. Some are philosophical, and others religious. We need the former, for without them we are in danger of being entangled in a mesh of superstition,

mythology, and fanaticism, which will injure character and bring discredit on religion. By itself, indeed, the philosophical idea of God is almost powerless. The rebel passions, the disharmonies of personality, have to be dealt with by very different methods from that of cold, intellectual reflection. Yet the intellectual basis of theism and of Christianity has a way of taking a stern revenge on those who neglect it. Perhaps it is just this neglect which is responsible for a good deal of the neurotic, timid, narrow-minded Christianity which sometimes we cannot help observing. The persecuting spirit is one manifestation of it ; religious emotionalism is another; neglect of the weightier matters of the law and of the faith through over-concentration on refinements is a third.

It is quite necessary, then, as it is certainly in harmony with all Catholic tradition, to consider the reasons for which it is alleged that there is a God. Modern philosophical theology does not state the classical fourfold proof quite in the traditional way ; but there is nothing in the assured results of science or in modern systems of philosophy to destroy its ultimate cogency. It remains true that our experience affords good grounds for asserting that there must be a supreme Power, a supreme Intelligence, a supreme Judge of right and wrong, and a central Mind to Whom all minds bear witness. Why is there a world, and what is the meaning of it ? These are questions which certainly

cannot be answered without coming to the idea of God. Can they indeed even be asked without starting from it? Yet they are questions which we cannot help asking as long as human nature remains what it is.

So, again, we may arrive at a philosophical idea of God along the scientific path of making a tentative hypothesis. Let us suppose, we say, that there is a God: great, noble, wise, loving, just. There seem to be some reasons for hoping that this may be the case, though there are certainly also very serious difficulties. Still, something in our nature seems to encourage us to believe that the Central Being of the universe cannot be inferior to ourselves. Rather, everything that is good in man must have its source in Him. Let us determine to stand or fall by that hypothesis, the noblest that we can conceive. There will be much that will puzzle us, but taking life broadly we shall find that the hypothesis is verified, if only it is noble enough. We shall certainly not arrive by this path at the idea of a God Who is determined to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number; but if we seek a God Who desires a world fit for heroes to live in (if the phrase is not now too deeply debased) our hypothesis will not fail us altogether.

Or we may argue from the great scientific postulate of the uniformity of nature, or its unity, which might be the better expression. It seems indeed hardly possible to begin to

explain this unless we are prepared to accept the conception of some general and unifying Mind. If it is not always easy to see the morals of the universe, it is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that it evolves on some rational scheme. In an irrational world anything might happen. In the world as we know it events can be foreseen. It is quite true that there are irresponsible people about, and we say, 'You never can tell what they will do next.' But the main outline of the universe is orderly and reasonable. Nature operates according to law.

So also we may arrive at an idea of God from our sense of value. Men may argue from age to age about truth, beauty, and goodness, but it is almost impossible to rid our minds of the conviction that these are real and valid conceptions. Our whole being rejects the notion that all statements are equally true, all forms equally harmonious, all actions equally to be approved. There are ideals, and an ideal implies a mind to frame it. And, further, these ideals are absolute. We can none of us believe that any ideal will do. And an absolute ideal implies an absolute Mind. The appeal lies to the ideal which is inherent in the constitution of the universe. In other words, What does God think about it?

Or, lastly—and we are now moving from the God of philosophy towards the God of religion—we may argue from the universal

sense of craving for Someone to pray to and to trust. It may be acknowledged, indeed, that much of this instinctive demand for God is crude and cannot be relied on to give us valid ideas of Him. But it is simply not true that developing personality tends to outgrow the idea of a Father in heaven. On the contrary, it seems as though creaturely personality was unable to grow towards its own perfection without the sustaining sense that the universe on the whole is fatherly. We may call this mere 'projection,' if we like.[1] But that does not make it untrue. If we are to form any notion about the ultimate nature of the universe, we can only 'project' upon it ideas arising out of our own experience; we have no others. The point is not how we came to imagine that such ideas are true, but whether in fact we can do without them. If not, we must either, with due reservations, acknowledge their validity, or else sorrowfully admit that the human mind is incapable of knowing anything but its own ideas. To acquiesce in the latter conclusion would be to settle down to a form of philosophical thought which seems to have had its day. It may be true that it is only through the human experience of good fathers that we could of ourselves arrive at the idea that the force which pervades the universe is that of a per-

[1] 'Projection' is the psychological term for the reading of our own ideas and feelings into our interpretation of external reality.

sonal Creator, Protector, and Guide; yet unless such an idea is proved inconsistent with the facts, and if it does in practice produce the finest type of human character, there is nothing intellectually disreputable in framing our lives to correspond with it.[1]

But it is just here, where the philosophical argument seems weakest, that we are met with what claims to be a divine revelation. And at once we feel that this is what we must have if religion is really to be the glorious pilgrimage which some men clearly find it. We cannot rest on something spun out of our own minds, however well it seems to fit the universe. As von Hügel wrote : ' The palace of my soul must somehow have two lifts, a lift which is always going up from below, and a lift which is always going down from above.' We cannot tolerate the idea that God is merely the conclusion of a syllogism, or a working hypothesis, or Someone necessitated by our realization of the unity of the universe, or the necessary Source of the idea of value, or a ' projection ' upon the universe of our own experience of fatherhood. All this is the ' grey ' of philosophic thought ; for religion we need the living ' green ' of the tree of life. God must come to meet us ; He must take the initiative and show us His face.

A religion which is only philosophic may and does help a man to form and to maintain

[1] Compare Valentine, *Modern Psychology and the Validity of Christian Experience*, chap. ii.

ideals ; but its blemish is that it has no appeal to the affections or the imagination, and therefore (all new psychological knowledge supports us here) it has no driving force, and provides little or no help in the great life-work of putting up a fight against temptation. For religion is not only a pilgrimage but a battle. To quote von Hügel again : 'Our religion begins to be our romance—our most solid sustaining romance—only on the day when it becomes adult and quite real—that is, only on the day when we wake up to our self and determine to fight it.'

Now the damning thing about a purely philosophic religion is that it is dull ; and the dull is the ineffective. We need the richness and beauty of the concrete idea of God as He has revealed Himself if the heart is to catch fire and leap to meet Him. If it be true that 'no heart is pure which is not passionate, no virtue safe which is not enthusiastic,' there must be something more buoyant than conclusions and hypotheses on which to mount to holiness.

We need God in the concrete. God answers our need, so we have been taught, by assuming human nature. We shall have to come back to the meaning of the Incarnation. For the moment let it suffice to say that if Jesus is the very Image of God in living flesh and blood (unless that is too good to be true), then religious passion may be pure and religious enthusiasm safe ; and that is more than can be said of

the passion and enthusiasm which some of the great historical religions have evoked. The passion for Christ is no less fiery for not being Bacchanalian, nor the love of Jesus less enthusiastic for not being Corybantic. The Incarnation, if it be true, is the climax of the self-revelation of God. As in a glass, darkened with the smoke of His own sacrifice, we see what God is in the only way in which we are capable of apprehending it.

God is both the One and the All ; but it is only as the One that the finite mind can begin to apprehend Him. And in Christ we have the One narrowed down to the limits of what it is essential that we should know about Him. Quite clearly it is not the totality of God which is made known to us in Christ ; but if we can but be sure that it is God and no one else who speaks to us in Christ, then the way is clear for the great acceptance. 'O God, Thou art my God.' There may be, there must be, depths of riches and beauty in the Godhead which could not be expressed in any life lived under human conditions ; the treasures of the Divine wisdom and knowledge are, in Christ, hidden treasures. Faith adores what the human eye could never see or the human heart conceive ; but for man there can be no fuller or more concrete revelation of God than that of God in Manhood. With Christ both mind and heart are satisfied, and if it be true that in Him we have seen the Father, then we need ask no more

of Christianity than that it should bring Christ to us and us to Christ, and through Christ to the eternal Father.

But this we must ask. As the heirs of the religious ages we could not be content with a God Who was only known either as the ground of all existence or as the hero of a mythological tale. Other religions, indeed, have had still more audacious ideals of nearness to God. They have testified to a hunger and thirst which will be satisfied with nothing less than a union with the Divine which comes near to a destruction of human personality ; and up to a point they can testify that their desires have been met. All the great religions have their mystics, and except in Judaism and Christianity mysticism is always pantheistic.

The Jew, indeed, with his special mission to bring home to men the awful separateness of God, never even in his most mystical moments gets beyond the consciousness that his soul is athirst for God and the confident assurance that the satisfaction of the divine presence awaits him. But it is that very assurance which is fulfilled in Christianity through the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is He Who enters the heart of the believer, and 'dwells therein, a ready Guest.' We shall come back to Pentecost. For the present we are only concerned with the Christian idea of God. That is set forth in the characteristic Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit. These

doctrines lead us straight to an idea of God as self-revealing and self-imparting, and worthy in both these activities of the Name of Father.

Cold, philosophic thought gives us some security for the necessary existence of God, as implied in the facts of all experience. The religious experience of the human race, and in particular of the people of God, presents us with other facts which imply, no less distinctly, a certain character of God. He is neither what philosophers call the Absolute, nor what Deists mean by the Supreme Being, but Creator, Judge, Saviour, Sanctifier ; most reverend, most lovable ; knowable, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, actually known ; Source of all life, and by the Holy Ghost living His own life recognizably within the breasts of mortal men.

This is the religious truth which underlies the intellectualized formula of the Holy Trinity. The formula exists for the truth, not the truth for the formula. The sacredness of this particular formula is that it bears the image and superscription of the regal Church, if not of her Master Himself.[1] To attempt to substitute

[1] It is difficult to be certain that the traditional Trinitarian formula of Baptism as given in S. Matthew xxviii. 19 actually came from our Lord's own lips, for the following reasons : (1) It is difficult to account for the comparatively undeveloped theology of the earlier Epistles and of the Petrine speeches in the earlier chapters of Acts if this highly theological formula was already known to the Apostles as a saying of Christ Himself ; (2) the phrase used in Acts is always Baptism

some other language is to forge and utter a spiritual coinage from our own private mint. We must not do that. But the actual language which, after long debate, the Church has selected, as the least inadequate which can be found, is hardly more than symbolic of the value which it signifies. 'Persons,' 'Substance,' how can we compress eternal truth into words which have to be taken almost as algebraic tokens before we can use them for a purpose so transcendent as to describe the Being of God? It was not for nothing that S. Augustine taught us that the very word 'person' had to be employed by the Church not because it was adequate, but *ne sileatur*: 'lest there should be no word said.'

But the august Name 'of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' taught to each one of us as the Name of the Ineffable, stands for the truth that all we are to learn of God—either through the exterior revelation of the Son or the interior inspiration of the Holy Ghost—belongs to the essence of God and to His eternity. The Father, as such, 'no man hath seen or can see.'[1] It is through the Son and the Spirit that we can begin to have an idea of God which is both true and concrete. But God did not first begin to have the Triune

'into the Name of the Lord Jesus.' These reasons are not conclusive, but they at least suggest that it is unwise to build too much on this particular text.

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 16.

character when Mary conceived, or when the flame-tongues played about the Apostles' heads. The possibility of any exterior revelation always depended on the essential forthcomingness of God. S. John seems to teach that when Isaiah saw 'the Lord' high and lifted up, it was indeed the glory of Jesus which he saw, and of Jesus that he spoke.[1] So, too, the possibility of any interior inspiration depends on the essential self-communicativeness of God, most clearly realized by the glowing line of the Jewish prophets. What indeed this Triune character means within the actual being of Deity is unknowable. 'Generation,' 'Spiration,' 'Procession,' are in this connection words whose meaning is inconceivable. But the moment God begins to enter into relations with the life of man, we begin to get glimpses of the truth that these relations are threefold, until at last in the light of the Christian revelation it becomes clear that the divine unity itself admits of activities so obviously and personally distinct as those of the Father, and of Jesus, and of the Spirit shed forth upon the Church.[2]

[1] S. John xii. 41.

[2] We may speak of God becoming incarnate, or of the Son becoming incarnate. Either of these phrases may be used indifferently. But we do not speak of Jesus as the Father incarnate, because incarnation is a coming forth from God, and God coming forth from Himself is God the Son. It might not be too bold to say that to human apprehension the Incarnation is the supreme instance of the Sonship which is in God, just as Pentecost is the supreme instance of His Spirithood.

No doubt the question may be raised, How far need the practical Christian concern himself with this abstruse doctrine of the Trinity? Probably it is true that he is under no obligation to ponder too deeply the mysteries of the Being of God apart from the Incarnation. He is concerned with what theologians call the Economic Trinity rather than with the Essential Trinity. In other words, for the purposes of religion he is concerned first with God revealed by Christ as Father; secondly with Christ Himself, recognized as God in Manhood; thirdly with the Holy Spirit as God making Christ present to the soul. Beyond that he need not go. Only, if he wants to go farther, he ought not to have any difficulty in holding with the Church that all this points to something in the essential character of God which makes it impossible that He should be just one simple centre of consciousness. Unitarianism is insufficient to uphold the richness of Trinitarian experience.

In Christianity the philosopher and the theologian, the humanist and the prophet, the Greek and the Jew, meet and join hands. But primarily and ultimately, Christianity is the religion of the prophets, and 'salvation is of the Jews.' Judaism begins with the idea of God, and slowly rises to truer ideas of His character, until the full orb is discerned in and through Jesus Christ. Hellenism begins with man and rises, with many hesitations, to the thought of what it is that our wonderful human nature

ultimately implies. The stream of the Christian Faith cannot, indeed, dispense with its Grecian tributary. Left in its Jewish channel it would tend, as the pre-Christian Jews always tended, to think of God as ' wholly other ' than man : Creator, Lawgiver, Father, Guide, Lover even, and Husband, but all the time ' God is in heaven and thou upon earth.' [1] The glory of Judaism is the completeness with which it portrayed the character of this mysterious Other. There is no better way of reading the Old Testament than that of trying to realize from it the character of God : His glory, His praise, His wondrous works ; the might of His marvellous acts ; His greatness; His abundant kindness; His righteousness, graciousness, mercy, long-suffering, goodness; His dominion, His eternity.

But while all this reached its climax in the Incarnation, it was the Incarnation also which called for other thoughts about God : Greek thoughts : thoughts beginning from the side of this world : the possibilities of man ; his godlike powers ; God in man ; God in nature ; God in all things. Left to itself this type of thought will end, has always ended, in Pantheism : God is all, and all is God ; God is I, and I am God ; God is revealed in the saint, and in the sinner : God is the sole reality, and man's destiny, as it is man's true ideal, is to lose himself in God. But

[1] Eccles. v. 2.

held in connection with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation it is preserved from that identification of the universe with God which destroys all personality and all morality, whether human or divine. It leads now not to Pantheism but to the very different doctrine of Divine Immanence. God not only created and creates the world, but He is in all persons and all things up to the limit of their capacity. He holds them in being, and provides them from moment to moment with all their powers. He is not they. They are not He. He uses them ; and at a certain point in evolution He even introduces into them that divine power of choice which can be so misused that they claim independence, and act as though they were themselves the centres each of his own little world. When this has happened, the universe, from being one orderly whole, controlled in all respects by the Spirit Who informs it, becomes discoordinated; it is a body afflicted on the vastest scale with a kind of S. Vitus's dance; under the spell of an illusory freedom the parts are in rebellion against the whole. Yet still, as the Christianized Greek mind was quick to see, human sin has not destroyed the kinship between God and man. The union may have been broken, but not beyond hope of repair. There is still something godlike in man, perhaps even something manlike in God. The Incarnation is not the artificial combination of opposites, but the goal to which the course of past history has tended, and the source from

which all that is hopeful in future history must flow. When S. Athanasius spoke of men being 'deified' by union with Christ, he did not mean that they would be re-absorbed into the divine essence, or anything pantheistic of that sort; he was merely expressing, hyperbolically perhaps, his sense of the unlimited possibilities of human nature re-inforced by kindred Deity.

There is, no doubt, one line of Christian tradition which has always tended to reject the infiltration of the Greek spirit. There is a school (we might roughly call it Augustinian) to which the primary ideas of Christianity are the Cross and salvation rather than the Incarnation with its corollaries of the possibility of knowledge of God and union with Him. To S. Augustine and his followers sin has practically destroyed the divine image in mankind. Let this be as it may. The Augustinian minimizing of the natural kinship between God and man hardly affects our main point. Let man's condition be ever so vile, that cannot injure the blessed fact of the mercy and the love of God, made known to His chosen in their own experience; from one point of view it even enhances them. And it is just this mercy and love which more than anything else prevents that dreadful tendency to set up an abstract, characterless God, which is the danger of sophisticated religion all the world over.

CHAPTER II

GOD REVEALED

CHRISTIANITY claims to be the worship and service of the living God. We have seen how rich and full of character is the Christian doctrine of God. He is not merely Something to be argued about but a Father to be known. If we have been right this knowledge is twofold ; it is acquaintance with His character ; but it is also experience of His influence. There are two great disclosures of the God Whose character is that of Father: the first is in the life, teaching, and suffering of God in manhood, and that is revelation through the Son ; the second is in the inner life of men admitted to share the Sonship of our Lord, and that is the inspiration of the Spirit.

If, then, we desire to have knowledge of God as He is, and not merely as we suppose He must be, we shall welcome with all our hearts anything that purports to be from His side a self-disclosure. We shall welcome it : but we shall also interrogate it. For this is a sphere in which we cannot contemplate with equanimity the risk of error. To be mistaken

as to the character of God is to make shipwreck of our ideals.

Is it possible, then, to indicate within a short compass the general lines of thought which give us confidence that in Christ we have an authentic revelation of God? To use such language is not to forget that faith is a gift. It is quite true that in the last resort we can never reason ourselves into acceptance of the Gospel. Religious conviction is God's act, not ours. And, to a very large extent, the Christian revelation is its own evidence. But none the less it is our duty to demand some credentials before surrendering our hearts and wills even to the unearthly attractiveness of the character of Jesus of Nazareth.

It is clear that in one book covering so wide a field we cannot hope to do more than state in the briefest possible fashion the considerations which may justify us in treating Jesus as the Incarnation of God.

As a preliminary we may notice His place in history. It is obvious enough that this is not exactly an argument. All that such a consideration can do is to forestall the objection that it is arbitrary to select this particular Person, and say that He, at such and such a date, was the unique Incarnation. 'Why B.C. 4?'[1] we are inclined to ask. We notice, then, that Jesus Christ appears on earth as the climax of a long preparatory period. If we are right in

[1] The probable date of the Nativity of Christ.

assuming that the Jew of the prophetic era was the providential religious leader of the world, just as the Greek of the fourth century B.C. was its leader in art and in philosophy, and the Roman of the first centuries B.C. and A.D. its leader in the science of world government, then the position in time of the earthly life of Jesus Christ is the moment above all others at which we can see that God might be expected to utter His supreme Word.

For the Jew had done his work. The specialized people of God had received their full training. They had been led by gradual stages from a polytheism which differed little from that of their neighbours first to appreciate the outstanding moral characteristics of their own tribal God as contrasted with the Baals of the surrounding nations, then to the recognition that He was such that He could not be merely a tribal God ; compared to Him no other being had any right to the title 'God' at all ; the objects of heathen worship were either nonentities or demons unworthy to be mentioned in the same breath as Jahweh. Finally the religious genius of the race was purged from both idolatry and polytheism by the Captivity and the preceding restriction of sacrificial worship to a single centre. Whatever the actual practice of the professors of Judaism in the first century there was no other race that could vie with the Jews in the actual experimental knowledge of God. Greece might have much to teach them

on the philosophic theory of religion ; but there was no one to compare with the Jew at his best for the first-hand practice of it.

To such a race as this, then, our Lord came as the climax of a mighty line of prophets, yet clearly conscious that He was not merely one of that line. Rather He was Himself the subject, as He was also the object, of their prophecies, ' He of Whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write.' The time of prophetic preparation was over ; had indeed been over for some centuries ; the appearance of one prophet more would have been an anti-climax. If anything were to come of all this preparation, now was the time for God to act. And if our Lord came into the world duly heralded, as the culminating point of the glittering procession of the revealers of God, so also the effects of His coming are certainly unique, and in one sense not unworthy of so tremendous a cause as that which Christians assign to them.

Christianity has in fact changed the face of the civilized world, in a way which no other religion has done. The point is not that it has been more rapidly successful, or that it commands men's allegiance more effectively than other faiths ; or again that it has been in any exclusive sense the religion of civilization. In these points Islam alone could on the whole outdistance it. But, where men have been willing to receive it and act upon it, it has in fact produced the highest conceivable type of character.

The Christian saint is a worthy product of what claims to be the complete and perfect moral revelation of God and the supreme and universal religion ; and Christian sanctity is the result of the life and teaching of our Lord.

So much, then, for His place in religious history. It is as a fact the central place. We come now to the actual portrait of Him given to us in the Gospels. And the first question we have to ask is, ' Is it trustworthy ? ' It is common knowledge that the Gospels, like the rest of the Bible, have been bombarded with criticism ; but the actual effect of the critical inquiry is not so generally known or acknowledged. It is fairly safe to say that apart from anti-miraculous presuppositions, the picture of our Lord, as given in the first three Gospels, is almost unaffected by the acceptance of the results of criticism. It is not merely a question of miracle, though it is only right to notice that there is no sign at all that the more startling miracles belong to a later or less trustworthy tradition. The most that can be said is that the evidence is less good for certain miracles which might be thought to have a somewhat ' magical ' character. But that sense of superhuman power and authority, which is really the salient feature in the Gospel portrait, is hardly touched by any results of criticism, whether literary or historical.

To say this is not to attempt anything so

desperate as the brushing aside of the results of critical studies. Nothing could be more faithless than to suggest that an inquiry into the actual method by which the books of the Bible were composed is going to spoil them for us, or destroy their power. There is nothing about the Bible that we cannot afford to know, and our confidence in its ultimate authority is enhanced, not lessened, when we know that it has been tested and examined. Criticism after all means appraisement ; it is not necessarily hostile ; and just as you must have a diamond cut before its full beauty can be seen, so it may be said that it is only during the last few generations that we have been able to appreciate fully the treasures of Holy Scripture.

We may take it as established that the critics have proved the existence of different strands as sources of the first three Gospels. These strands are probably not all of equal value.[1] But broadly speaking we may say that the testimony of the 'Synoptic'[2] Gospels stands unshaken. Of course it is open to any one to say that they are inherently incredible. Only, if any one does say that, he has to explain the origin of this strange picture of the Man of Nazareth. The one impossible thing to do is to reconstruct the figure of Jesus on naturalistic lines. If Jesus

[1] In particular, the unsupported testimony of S. Matthew is thought to be of lower value than that of S. Mark or S. Luke.

[2] i.e. S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke.

was not a wonder-worker, and if He did not make any superhuman claims, then we hardly know anything trustworthy about Him at all.

In regard to the Fourth Gospel the case is rather different. Scholars usually hold that this Gospel is interpretative rather than historical, so far as the actual words assigned to our Lord are concerned.

But further : how far are we justified in saying that this picture of an authoritative Christ, even if we apply to Him in some sense the title ' Son of God,' is really in a transcendental sense a revelation of God Himself ? Is this Sonship metaphysical, or merely moral ?

Now, on the one hand, our Lord never says, ' I am God.' He never even comes near to saying it except in S. John ; and in that Gospel it is always difficult to be confident that we have His own *ipsissima verba.* Nor does it seem, from the evidence of the early chapters of the Acts, that His followers were at first prepared to say anything as boldly revolutionary as that. Indeed it was so obvious that Jesus Christ could not actually be the same as the eternal Father that it called not only for daring but for theological genius amounting to inspiration before a doctrine of His divinity could be worked out. That genius and inspiration were found pre-eminently in the two great Apostles who laid the foundations of Christology, S. Paul and S. John ; but it is difficult to refuse to recognize the same qualities also in the long line of

theological thinkers who gradually found words in which to express the mystery of the Incarnation, so far as human language is capable of expressing it at all.

Jesus is not the same Person as the Father. That is sufficiently obvious. But on the other hand, if we can trust our authorities, Jesus claimed divine prerogatives. He claimed to over-ride the divine law,[1] to be the Judge of quick and dead,[2] to be the only person who really knew the Father.[3] He sharply distinguished Himself from the mere servants of God, claiming to be His Son.[4] He demanded an allegiance which goes far beyond anything that the most authoritative teacher could rightly claim, bidding men leave all,[5] 'hate' father and mother,[6] take up the Cross and follow Him.[7] As we study the earlier Gospels (leaving the Gospel of S. John out of account as a professedly theological work), we are more and more impressed with this sense that they tell of Someone Who is immersed in God after a fashion that is unparalleled. He belongs to God utterly. And in consequence there is never hesitation, doubt, or diffidence. He can bid men follow Him without the slightest indication that He is merely a guide. He invites them to come to Him with no sort of hint that He will lead them

[1] S. Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, 34.
[2] ibid., xxv. 31–46; S. Luke xiii. 27. [3] S. Luke x. 22.
[4] ibid., xii. 1–12. [5] ibid., xiv. 33. [6] ibid., xiv. 26.
[7] ibid., xiv. 27.

away from Himself to God. To come to Him, to follow Him, is all that any man need do.[1]

So, little by little, His disciples came to think of Him as One so immersed in God, that indeed the real Self Whom this obviously human life expressed was the Divine Self. What effect this profound and growing conviction was to have on the Christian idea of God is a later story, though we have already touched on the point in chapter i. But within the limits of the New Testament this question is hardly faced. What we find there, in the few great Christological passages, is the Christian teacher struggling to find words which shall make it plain that God was in Christ perfectly, so that there was nothing in Christ which was not an expression of God Himself. Christ is not a mere man who came into being at a particular moment like the rest of us. In so far as He is a human being, of course He did so come into being. There is nothing unreal about the human nature of our Lord. But from the first moment of His conception in the womb, His soul and body exist for no other reason than to be a soul and body through which God can express Himself.

[1] According to S. John, on the other hand, our Lord does speak of coming to the Father through Himself. But He continues: 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. . . . I am in the Father and the Father in Me' (*S. John* xiv. 9, 10). And there can be no doubt that S. John means us to believe in the absolute Deity of Christ.

Even in the comparatively naïve pages of the earlier chapters of the Acts, we find S. Peter giving Him the surely divine titles of ' Prince ' (or ' Author ') ' of life ' [1] and ' Lord of all.' [2]

But it was S. Paul, the father of Christian theology, to whom it was given to think out the implications of the Christian Gospel. We can follow stage by stage the foundations which he laid for the great fabric of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Jesus is the ' Son of God.' [3] He is to be associated with the Father as the source of all blessing. He is the ' Lord of glory,' [4] ' through Whom are all things,' [5] Who at His human birth, ' though He was rich became poor.' [6] His original being was in the ' form,' that is the essential nature, of God.[7] He is the instrument, the meaning, and the goal of all creation,[8] and the ' Image of the invisible God.'[9] Finally it may even be that S. Paul dares to speak of Him as ' God.' [10]

S. John is but giving a more technical, philosophical turn to the same doctrine by making use of the conception of the Word, or Self-expression of God. This conception was not in itself original. But what was original and daring beyond words, was the doctrine that this mysterious and rather vague idea of the Word could become clear-cut and definite by being

[1] Acts iii. 15. [2] ibid., x. 36. [3] ibid., ix. 20.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 8. [5] ibid., viii. 6. [6] 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[7] Phil. ii. 5. [8] Col. i. 16, 17. [9] ibid., i. 15.
[10] Acts xx. 28 ; Rom. ix. 5 ; Titus ii. 13.

identified with an historical character. 'God cannot be without His own self-expression,' he seems to say: 'that is a well-known idea to you all. But we Christians have come face to face with this self-expression in a particular human Being. And let no one dare to say that He is not a human Being. The whole point of our message is that it is in Flesh that the Godhead has been revealed to us.'[1]

So, in the same sense, the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus as 'the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power,' but also as the 'Son, through Whom God made the worlds,' and through Whom He has at last spoken clearly and distinctly.[2]

Later theological thought was occupied to a very large extent in trying to reconcile these two ideas of Jesus as the Son, which seems to imply a personality separate from that of God, and Jesus as the Word, or Image, of God, which suggests that He is simply God manifesting Himself. The final balance of truth was reached when it came to be seen that Sonship is not something external to Deity, but that God is essentially and in Himself both Father and Son.

It is true that the word Son is less obviously applicable to the Eternal Word as He is in Himself; in Scripture, indeed, 'the Son' almost seems to mean the Incarnate Son. But

[1] S. John i. 1–14; 1 S. John i. 1–3. [2] Heb. i. 1–3.

the possibility of Incarnation is something rooted in the Being of God, Who is not to be thought of as bare and barren Unity, but as being Himself eternally both Lover and Beloved, both Activity and Act.

The supreme revelation of the eternal 'Sonship' which is in God, was the taking of human nature into Himself. Thus the Incarnate Word has 'two Natures' (which simply means that He is both God and Man), but only one Person. 'He is not two, but one Christ.' But we must not be deceived by any form of metaphorical thought which would represent this union of natures in one Person as though two steeds were being directed by a single driver. It is rather that God, Whose self-expression had hitherto been largely beyond our ken, has now condescended to express Himself in a human Being Who is so completely immersed in the Godhead as to have no separate personality of His own. The human Being has a will of His own, but that will has from the beginning been gripped by the divine will, which expresses itself in the human will through the psychological action of human striving and resistance to temptation. If we think it out, that is the only tolerable way of putting the matter. It is obvious that the divine will cannot struggle, as Christ did in Gethsemane; yet what we need is the assurance that it was God Who struggled. He was enabled then to struggle, by becoming human without ceasing to be divine.

But at this point there is a difficulty which presents itself to many minds. 'Is it credible,' men say, 'that the history of this particular little planet can be the all-important matter of the universe?' When we begin to think of the staggering number of the stars, and the probability that many of them also have planets, are we really sane if we assume that this little earth is the only inhabited world? And if there are others, why should this one be fixed on for the Incarnation of God Himself? Really and truly, is not the whole story exploded along with the geocentric cosmology?

Now if this merely means that this earth is too unimportant a place for the great God to concern Himself with, there is no difficulty at all. It is snobbishness *in excelsis* that conceives of God as a person who could possibly be thought of as saying, 'That planet is so small as to be beneath my notice.' After all, He created it. But of course it is not here that the difficulty lies. Granted that God would concern Himself with any set of spiritual beings anywhere, why should He not therefore become incarnate in each of the planets in turn? And the answer to this appears to be, 'Well, why not?' There does not seem to be any theological reason whatever why God should not deal with every inhabited planet by a separate Incarnation. It would only mean that God the Son took other 'humanities' into personal union with Himself in other parts of the universe.

'Humanities' is not, indeed, the right word, for the hypothetical denizens of other worlds are presumably very different from man. But we have no other word for embodied spirits, so 'humanities' must stand. Of course it is all sheer speculation, and the truth may be very different. All that needs to be said is that there does not seem to be any theological inhibition against holding that God might take as many created natures into Himself as seemed good to Him, and that each one would equally be 'the Word made Flesh.'

Now if it be true that Christ is the Incarnation of God, it is quite impossible to exaggerate the importance of making a study of Him. His words, His acts, His sufferings, must be a window into the heart of God, and so into the ultimate meaning of the universe.

'Is the universe friendly?' It has been truly said that that is the fundamental question to which every one wants to know the answer. And we must not say that Christianity gives us just the answer we want. For if 'the universe' means the totality of creation, apart from the Creator, then it certainly seems, as perhaps we might have suspected, that the universe is not on the whole friendly even to its Creator. When the Creator spoke the universe silenced Him. The feeling, which so often comes over us, that the universe is rather like a beautiful sleeping tiger is certainly not lessened when we see how it responds to the Creator's love. We cannot

as Christians simply say, 'God's in His heaven; all's right with the world.' But, if Christ is indeed 'the Image of the invisible God,' then the Heart and Centre, the object and the ultimate meaning of the universe is love, and however unsatisfactory the universe may be at the moment, however much it may struggle against its own true good, we can be patient and wait till what S. Paul calls its groaning and travailing is accomplished, and as the fruit of it those other 'sons of God' are produced who will at last explain and justify those age-long pangs.[1]

If the doctrine of the Incarnation is true, it is a death-blow to the pantheistic identification of the universe with God. In the supreme instance a portion of the universe rose up against God and slew His Son. How deeply the universe is infected with hostility to God it is difficult to say. There is much in nature which seems strangely contradictory of the character of God as revealed to us in Christ. If this is really so, we can only get a tolerable explanation of it by assuming (as our Lord by His teaching about evil spirits seems to assume) that the reign of evil is something far wider than the mere rebellion of human wills. To postulate an ultimate principle of evil over against God seems philosophically impossible, but it is difficult to resist the conclusion that much of the universe is somehow under the influence of powers hostile to God and goodness. We may rightly rejoice

[1] See Rom. viii. 18–22.

in the beauty of a sunset, but there are ugly things in nature as well as beautiful, and no amount of contemplation of a sunset is a substitute for the contemplation of God in Christ.

The universe by itself may not be friendly ; but if the character of the God of the universe is really expressed by the human life of Jesus Christ, then there is nothing to be pessimistic about.

For, first, the God revealed in Jesus is a God Who loves all men, the sinner as truly as the righteous. That does not mean a vague general benevolence. If there is one thing more than another characteristic of our Lord, it is His exquisite power of individualizing. What a joy to know that God is dealing with us with the same delicate discrimination as, in Manhood, He dealt with the holy Mother, with S. Peter, with Nathanael, with the woman who was a sinner, with the penitent robber! The universe may destroy saint and sinner by earthquake or flood, but the hands of the merciful and faithful Creator receive them and deal with them each according to his needs.

So also God's love reflected in Jesus Christ is not easy-going, but stern and exacting. For this we have not only the testimony of our Lord as to the severity of God's judgement, but His own practice with His disciples. The call to discipleship meant a sharing of His cup and His baptism and a bearing of His cross. The universe seems to let us drift on along its sur-

face, without exacting much effort either in calm or storm, until at last we perish through rock or rapid ; God, as revealed in Christ, points us to a steep and narrow path.

Again, God is revealed to us by our Lord as the Giver of all, and in the end of Himself. His love is not a mere delight in His own creation, or in that which is intrinsically attractive, like the loves of the natural world. It is a love which makes Him pour Himself out at the feet of an unthankful, evil world, offering Himself freely and putting all His resources at our disposal. We can no more seek Him in vain than any one could have sought Jesus in vain. He is beforehand with us all the time. While we are yet a great way off He runs to meet us, and covers us with His kisses ; when we are wounded and half dead, He comes where we are and heals and tends us, if we will but allow Him to do so.

And yet again, He is a God Who respects our freedom and will never force Himself upon us. On the contrary, He puts Himself in our power and accepts what we choose to mete out to Him. He will never cease to appeal for our love, but if we will we can misuse Him, as did a Caiaphas or a Judas.

But most of all, the revelation of God in Jesus shows us that God wants us ; not in the metaphysical sense of being incomplete without us, but in the moral sense that He craves for our devotion, and desires to show Himself and

give Himself to us. The Gospels give us the picture of our Lord first making friends of the Apostles, and then as the final act of friendship giving them what He actually called His Body and His Blood. And this is what God would do with us all. He would have us know Him, and that in itself amounts to eternal life. But when we even begin to know Him we find that that is not all. Christ bids us not merely look in at a window and see God ; but enter in at a door, and meet Him and admit Him into our hearts and souls. The Incarnation turns out in the end to be far more than a revelation of the character of God. It is God Himself coming into the conditions of mortal life in order to give us the opportunity of tasting a new order of life which it is beyond the power of this death-dealing universe to crush ; a life which is called eternal not merely because it goes on and on, but because it is from God, and is therefore independent of the accidents of time.

CHAPTER III

SALVATION

ACCORDING to the theology of S. John, the object for which our Lord came into the world was that He might bring to men eternal life. It will be worth our while to try to analyse this great idea, and to see how we may rightly conceive of Jesus Christ as having brought to us this boon.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that in the terminology of the New Testament the phrase does not mean either life which goes on for ever, or, exclusively, life beyond the grave. The general assumption of the New Testament is that all human life goes on for ever, and that life beyond the grave is continuous with the earthly life. A man may survive death and yet not have any life that deserves to be called eternal ; and on the other hand a life which is truly eternal may be ours here and now. Eternity in this sense has to do with quality rather than duration. Eternal life is life which deserves the name from the point of view of the eternal values. It is life which is not dependent on the things of this world, but one which is lived for the sake of God, and in the light of eternity. This is not

to read into Jewish writers the Greek metaphysical idea of timelessness ;[1] but merely to emphasize the fact that eternal does not mean either 'future' or 'everlasting.' Perhaps the best paraphrase would be *belonging to the heavenly order, and therefore independent of the accidents of temporal existence.*

There is that in us which seems to testify to the fact that to be eternal is the true aim and purpose of human life, and that we cannot live on the sensuous level without missing that aim and purpose. This is true, and we know that it is true. The optimism of the Pagan is superficial, and is soon succeeded by weariness, sadness, and depression. Earthly pleasures fade, and even in the moment of enjoyment they disappoint. Eternal life is the only true life.

In this idea of eternal life three strands seem woven together. In S. John's own teaching, whether given in words which are purely his own, or in language in which he claims to represent the Master's doctrine, the ruling conception seems to be the knowledge of God. The other great theologian of the New Testament, S. Paul, does not use the actual phrase (except in the Pastoral Epistles), but the idea of an imparted life which is other than the life of the flesh is vital to his whole system. To him this life is no less than the very life of Christ Him-

[1] 'There shall be time no longer' (*Rev.* x. 6) ought almost certainly to be translated 'There shall be delay no longer' (see R.V. margin).

self. To be a Christian is to be 'in Christ,' and so united to God. And throughout the New Testament there is the tacit assumption that sin is spiritual death, and that therefore life must imply power to obey the divine law. Knowledge of God, union with God, power to carry out the will of God : those are the three elements which constitute eternal life. To impart these things to mankind was the object of the coming of our Lord.

But spiritual gifts cannot simply be presented to people as though they were material things. It seems that three things were needful before men could have the capacity for receiving the gift of eternal life. First, it had to be displayed to them. Secondly, they had to desire it. Thirdly, a representative act was necessary to express on behalf of the human race, sinful, weakened, and hostile to God, that homage to the eternal will which it was incapable of offering for itself.

Perhaps all this sounds too much like the drawing up of an artificial 'scheme of redemption.' We are rightly suspicious of excessive neatness in theology, and these nicely articulated threefold divisions seem impertinent when imposed upon the ultimate truths of God's dealings with mankind. Clearness, we feel, can be purchased at too great a cost. But of course it is not contended that the threefold analysis, either of eternal life or of Christ's redemptive work, is exhaustive, nor that these fundamental

verities are really capable of being split up into separate parts. It is only that the human mind can usually gain a more synoptic view of the whole when it has first made the attempt to see the parts successively.

I

First then, eternal life had to be *displayed* to mankind. It is clear that if eternal life is to be offered to reasonable and responsible beings they must first know something of what it is. Otherwise the imparting of it will be mechanical and not moral.[1] The only sure way of knowing what it is is to see some one living it. But apart from the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ we look in vain for any standard which really satisfies the mind and conscience.

We must not exaggerate. There were wonderful contributions made to the fullness of human life before the coming of our Lord. The religion of the Jews, the spiritual experience of the sages of the Far East, the art and philosophy of the Greeks, the Roman sense of civic duty, had lifted the ideals of human life far above the animal level. Yet it is impossible to point to

[1] The custom of Infant Baptism might seem repugnant to this principle. Infants are not yet reasonable or responsible. But the Church has surely been rightly inspired to believe, in view of the known will of God for the salvation of all men, that it would be wrong to refuse the pledge of eternal life to children, if only we have some security that they will be taught about its nature 'so soon as they shall be able to learn.'

any of the pre-Christian ideals, to say nothing of pre-Christian actual standards, and say that there is human life as it ought to be lived, and as in the divine ideal it was meant to be. Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Phidias, Cato, Marcus Aurelius, as well as Isaiah and the Hebrew prophets, have all no doubt something to teach us as to the eternal values of life ; yet there is not one of them on whose lips we could place the words, 'I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it abundantly.' [1]

But with Christ it is different. 'No one knoweth who the Father is save the Son.' [2] If it be true that the first element in eternal life is the knowledge of God, then in the story of Christ it can hardly be denied that that level of life was shown forth as never before. Orthodox Christians believe that our Lord's knowledge of the Father was of a special order and character. But even apart from orthodox belief, Jesus of Nazareth is the religious genius of all time. If there is anything at all in religion, He at least has got hold of it. Others may have opinions and views ; they argue and persuade. He seems to know ; He judges and proclaims. And we see at once how this knowledge of the vital centre of all things lifts His life on to a wholly different plane. He knows, as S. John makes Him say, whence He comes and whither He goes, [3] and consequently He walks through

[1] S. John x. 10. [2] S. Luke x. 22 ; cf. S. Matt. xi. 27.
[3] S. John viii. 14.

life, and through death, with an assurance and a confidence which is all His own.

So with the second element, union with God. Here again orthodoxy asserts a union of a very special and individual kind, a union of substance, a union so close that indeed He Himself is the very Word of God Incarnate and Himself inseparable from God. But once more leaving orthodoxy out of account, we need not hesitate to claim for the pure humanity of Christ a perfect harmony with God. However far that humanity may be from reflecting the whole of the divine essence, it would be difficult for any one to point to anything which suggested discontinuity with God. If eternal life means unimpeded intercourse with God, then Christ in His earthly life enjoyed it as no one else has ever done.

And with the third element the case is clearer still. The moral perfection of Jesus has really nothing to fear from any critic. No doubt there are those who condemn the whole moral ideal of Christianity, and they naturally find much to blame in the character of its Founder. But wherever His preaching is accepted it will be almost universally acknowledged that His practice conformed to it. No position is so paradoxical as to find no defenders, and there are those who claim to be Christians and yet deny the sinlessness of Christ. No doubt it is impossible to prove a negative, and the only answer seems to be the question assigned by S. John

to our Lord Himself, 'Which of you convicteth Me of sin?' Then if no instances can be alleged—and those which are alleged seem extraordinarily unconvincing—we can only say that, so far as our evidence goes, free and willing obedience to the will of God is characteristic of every moment of His life, and that if on other grounds we have reason to believe that He is the Incarnation of God, the whole idea of sin is out of the question. Our Lord's sinlessness, even if it could be proved, would not establish His Deity; but most certainly His Deity establishes His sinlessness.[1]

Here, then, we have a human life which displays a perfect knowledge of God, perfect union with God, and perfect obedience to God. At last we know what human life ought to be. We can see something of what is meant when it is said that human life is meant to be eternal life. This is the life that God means us to live, and Christ came into the world to make it possible for us to live it. And the first step

[1] There is a curious passage in Dr. Streeter's able book, *Reality* (pp. 189–193), in which he objects to the use of the term 'sinlessness' in this connection though expressing his personal belief in the moral perfection of our Lord. He thinks it too colourless a word to apply to His heroic character. But surely, if 'sin' includes, as it must, 'sins of omission,' then to call our Lord sinless means not only that He never did wrong, but (even more important) that He always did the very best. Dr. Streeter is probably thinking chiefly of the popular associations of the word, and perhaps he is right about them.

towards this is to make a study of it. That is why some study of the Gospels is a necessity of the spiritual life. People talk vaguely about the duty of reading the Bible. No doubt it is true that that is a valuable practice of the Christian life. But the reading of the Bible in general is not to be mentioned in the same breath as the devout study of the Gospels. That study is essential, for without it we do not know what it is that is being offered to us by our religion.

II

It would be tempting to say that if the first step towards eternal life is to study the Gospels there is only one other, and that is to follow the example which is there set forth. Ah, if we could ! Things are not so simple as that. They were not so simple when Christ first came to earth. Then He displayed before the eyes of men eternal life in all its fullness, and almost without exception they turned from Him, or even turned against Him. There was an essential antagonism between actual men and women and that ideal life of eternity as He displayed it to them.

There was an attraction also, or human nature would be lost indeed, but in the end some turned on Him and cried, ' Away with Him,' and all the rest, or almost all, ' forsook Him and fled.' That is what actually happened when eternal life was introduced into a world which

was alien to it. And if it is important for us to study the record of what eternal life meant when it was actually lived out to completeness, it is, if possible, even more necessary that we should ponder the reaction to it of ordinary human beings. That reaction was crucifixion ! And Christ crucified reveals to us the ghastly truth about the seamy side of human nature. Capable ideally of eternal life, actually it attempted to destroy eternal life at sight. It could not stand it.

That is the measure of the distance which humanity has travelled from what it was meant to be, from what it might have been, from what it ought to be. Can we go on to say ' from what it yet might be ' ? There precisely is the difficulty. Something has happened to humanity which was never meant to happen to it, and which conscience tells us ought not to have happened. But now that it has happened we are in the grip of it. Sin is not simply so many unconnected acts of evil or neglects of good ; there is a solidarity about it. Somehow or other, looking back over it all, we can see an inevitability about the rejection of our Lord : God had foreseen it ; our Lord had foreseen it ; the prophets had dimly foreseen it ; even Plato had foreseen that if the perfectly righteous man ever appeared on earth he would run the risk of crucifixion.[1] Something has happened to humanity as a whole. Opposition to God and to righteousness is some-

[1] *Rep.* ii. 362.

how ingrained. Whether or no 'original sin' is quite the best expression that could have been devised to define this calamity, there is no good in denying the fact. Its evidence is everywhere, and the Cross is the central, inescapable result of it.

Most assuredly, then, it is idle to say that, now we have seen what the ideal is, all that is needed is for us to follow it. To say that is to mock at the impotence of the human will.

But the very thing which is the supreme evidence of the sin of the world is also the instrument by which it is taken away. For, first, let us notice that if the Cross suggests the universality of evil, it throws an even more lurid light upon its horror. The ultimate result of it, in the selected and deliberately isolated instance, is the torture and death of the one ideal Man, the rejection of God in Manhood. In the light of the Cross we know the real inwardness of what we call sin. Just as we should realize the terror of snakebite as a new thing if we saw our best friend bitten by a cobra and dying in agony, so it is when we see the actual effect of ordinary sins on the All-Holy that we begin to see what sin really is.

And we must emphasize 'ordinary sins.' We miss the point of the Gospel narrative if we insist on thinking of the actors in the Passion as exceptional monsters of wickedness. They were typical members of their class, no better

and no worse than the others. It would take some hardihood surely to claim that had we been there we should have remained constant at the Cross with Mary. Can we be sure that we should merely have forsaken Him and fled? Can we think of nothing which might have put us among the crowd which shouted, 'Crucify Him'?

The Cross, then, shows us the meaning of sin as such; not merely of certain particular sins which took place a long time ago. To sin is to side against Jesus and with His enemies. As the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, it is to 'crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.'[1] But to realize this is to have taken a step towards salvation and eternal life. Christ cannot do His work in us mechanically. His first task is to rouse within us those dispositions which will make us forgivable. We must aspire after eternal life as it has been exhibited in Him, and we must have a loathing for sin as it has been exhibited in His Crucifixion. Our meditation on the Gospels must in the end bring us to our knees in shame and horror before the crucifix. This, then, is the ultimate result of sin. It is the destruction of all that is noblest and truest in human nature, of all that is most truly human, according to the true and original idea of man. This is what I do as far as in me lies, when I consent to sin. I insult Christ; I applaud His enemies; I

[1] Heb. vi. 6; cf. x. 29.

destroy whatever vestiges of eternal life there may be in myself.

But the horror of sin is not the sum of the meaning of the Cross, nor is hatred of sin the chief disposition which it is meant to elicit. The crucifix would never have been the beloved object that it is if it stood for nothing but the tragedy of human blindness and cruelty when face to face with its own true ideal. Christ crucified is the love of God made manifest. At all costs He would draw nigh to man who had wandered so far from Him. At all costs He would make known to him his true ideals. If the cost should turn out to be more awful than could have been conceived, then so much the greater would be His claim on the love and devotion of the world.

The ancient Greeks had a story of a human hero who, in love for his fellow men, braved the wrath of heaven and climbed to the home of the gods to steal from thence the precious gift of fire, through which alone material civilization was made possible. And the end of that story was that in jealous rage the Father of gods and men seized on Prometheus and bound him in chains to a rock and set his vultures on him to gnaw at his liver till the end of time. We may well contrast that with the story of the Cross, which tells how the true and eternal God could not bear that man, His child, should lack whatever was needed for his moral and spiritual advance, and therefore came down Himself to

earth, bringing with Him the true and sacred fire of life eternal without which no progress was possible. And in this case it was the jealous rage and cowardice and pride of man which seized on God Incarnate and nailed Him to the Cross and glutted itself with the spectacle of His agonies. If the figure of Prometheus Bound is the emblem of all that is unworthy in the Greek ideals of divinity, so also is the crucifix the token of the love of God made known to us in Christ.

The Cross, then, has power to break down the final obstacles within ourselves to the possibility of our receiving the gift of eternal life. The first obstacle was ignorance. Not having seen eternal life, how could we aspire after it? The second was self-complacency. Until we knew what sin meant to God, how could we hate it as it deserves? And the third is self-love. Until Christ can appeal to all our instincts of gratitude and love, what motive is there strong enough to draw us out of ourselves? The earthly life of Christ, culminating as it does in the Cross, illuminates our ignorance, destroys our self-complacency, and elicits our love.

All this is the beginning of His gracious work upon our souls. We can do nothing without Him, but neither, in another sense, can He do anything without us. The initiative is His all the way, but the response must come from us. Of course we can ignore Him, but if we will but pay attention, and continue to do so, then there will inevitably arise with us those disposi-

tions which will enable Him, without doing violence to His own essential justice, to forgive and save, and ultimately impart to us a share in the essential life of heaven itself.

III

So far we have been thinking chiefly of the action of God towards man. Through the Incarnation, the earthly life of Christ, and through His sufferings God has been teaching man the lesson that he needed to learn as to the true nature of human life and its true ideals ; and likewise has been giving him the opportunity of attaining those right dispositions of mind which alone could make further progress possible for a moral being. Now the time has come to think of the response of man towards God. But at once we are confronted with a difficulty. For us men, weakened by that bias to selfishness which seems to be a part of human nature in its present condition (even when the mind and conscience are in active revolt against it), knowledge and good dispositions are not enough. We need a Leader, and we need a reinforcement of the will. The response of mankind to the known will of God must have a fresh beginning. A new power has to be set in motion if we are not for ever to be condemned to impotence.

This new power begins with Christ. The human life of Christ may be thought of as one long act of homage to the eternal will, and one

long realization of the obscured ideals of mankind. We must remember that Christ is so completely human that obedience, homage, adoration, sacrifice, and prayer are His normal activities, for the very reason that these are the normal response of man towards God. And in Him for the first time obedience and religious worship are realized as being the outward and inward sides of the same activity. God is ultimately honoured, not by sacrifices and morality side by side, but by morality sacrificially offered to Him as creaturely obedience to His eternal will. This precisely is the offering made by Christ. 'Lo, I come to do Thy will'[1] is the motto of His life.

The life of Christ is a life of perfect obedience and therefore of perfect adoration. The obedience is tested by every conceivable form of opposition and temptation, and finally by the Cross, and it rings true every time. But the temptations and sufferings of our Lord must not be thought of merely as a testing. Rather they were the means by which the heroic quality of His obedience was made actual. Among the actual miseries and sins of the world nothing less than heroic obedience is enough for the supreme standard. Yet one cannot be a hero if there is nothing to be heroic about. If Christ had entered into normal human relationships, lived a placid and ordinary human life unstained by sin, and at last died on a bed, the

[1] Heb. x. 7.

whole picture would have been different : we could never feel that here was the great new epoch of human life at last rising to the divine standards. Surely it is true, as the Epistle assures us, that He 'learned obedience by the things which He suffered,' [1] and that He 'was made perfect through sufferings.' [2]

That our Lord's own individual offering was well-pleasing to God is a point that need not be laboured. Any one who believes in God and in righteousness would take that for granted. The difficulty with so many of us is to see what possible difference His self-sacrifice could possibly make to any one else, over and above its effects as the most poignant of appeals and the most inspiring of examples.

We have, then, to think of Christ as Representative and as Priest. We may imagine ourselves looking upon His crucifixion. Here, we remind ourselves, is the Man Who has lived out human life as it ought to be lived, missing nothing of its eternal values. It is His life and teaching that have inspired us with a new sense of what human life ought to be. And as we look at the Cross and see the cost of living such a life in such an environment we are filled with love and gratitude, but also with shame and horror when we remember that we ourselves are part of the environment and have all too much sympathy with the conditions which brought Him to His death.

[1] Heb. v. 8. [2] ibid., ii. 10.

But there is something else. Our Lord said we were to follow Him even to the extent of taking up the Cross ourselves, in spirit if not in actuality. He bids us consecrate ourselves to God in the spirit of His own Cross. 'Come what may; cost what it may; I dedicate myself to God.' If in that spirit we can look on Christ crucified we are one step further on the path of eternal life. For then, taking Him at His word, we make Him our representative. That at least is what we mean. Our intention is that of the holy Cross. We honour in will the act of our Representative, saying 'Amen' to it, delivering it as our own act and deed. All the debt that we could never pay He has paid in full on our behalf.

Earlier ages for the most part looked on that debt in terms of penal suffering. It is more congenial to us to look on it in terms of perfect obedience. But whichever way we look at it 'representative' is a better word to use than 'substitute.' There is a certain truth in 'substitute,' no doubt, but it is a word full of suggestions of ideas which are horribly untrue, and come near to a blasphemous caricature of the divine justice. It is dreadful to think how many noble minds have been turned from Christianity by the idea that its central teaching imputed to God the Father the character of a cynical and blood-thirsty tyrant. The Cross is an act of representative obedience. The ideal Man, the Head and completion of the human

race, accepts the consequences of obedience. We others, drawn by admiration, by love, by shame, by emulation, by hope, stretch out our hands to take our own cross. In other words, we acknowledge that it is only along the road of perfect obedience at all costs that man can really be pleasing to God, and, blunderingly enough, we set our faces towards that road, following the Master. So we begin to 'accept Christ.'

Dare we then go on to say that God will take the will for the deed, and honour the act of our Representative as though it were our own? Surely, if there is one proverb which is justified, it is that which says that the way to hell is paved with good intentions; and if there is one kind of person who is the type of failure, it is the one whom we call 'well-meaning.' No: the problem is more subtle than that. All that we have been dealing with hitherto is after all only preliminary to the real Atonement. No mere gesture, even if it be one of willingness to take up the Cross, can really make us 'at one' with God. The full Atonement is only made when God has transformed our nature by indwelling it.

The whole theory of Christianity depends on the truth that what Christ did externally on our behalf can be imparted to us internally as something which though from Him is yet our very own. Eternal life is a gift. To receive that gift we must have the right dispositions: yet

even the dispositions must be aroused in us by God Himself. So true is it that we cannot save ourselves. But it is a real gift, not a mere loan. That is to say it really does become our own. It is not a mere cloak to cover our own essential sinfulness, but a power that enters into us, and changes the whole texture of our being. In its first moment it may be thought of as the mere undeserved goodwill of God towards us ; but not for an instant is that goodwill a mere otiose benevolence ; at once it begins its good work in us, to be performed, as S. Paul teaches, 'until the day of Jesus Christ.' Eternal life is like a seed. A germ of the new life is planted in the soul, and God knows that unless we destroy that germ by deliberate sin it will grow and grow until at last it makes us as Christlike as we are capable of becoming, and drives us as far along the way of obedience, which is the way of the Cross, as it is God's will that we should go. As the sculptor sees the statue in the shapeless block of marble, God sees the oak in the acorn and the saint in the sinner.

Bearing this in mind, we shall do well to go back and try to see a little more deeply into that representative act by which our Lord bore our sin upon the Cross. It may well be felt that what has hitherto been said is something like a watering down of the great evangelical truth of the propitiatory sin-bearing of our Lord. We have spoken as though our Lord's sacrifice was merely self-consecration to the will of God

at all costs. It was that indeed : but it was more. It is impossible to read His words about the Body given for us and the Blood shed,[1] and the Life given as a ransom,[2] without realizing some further mysterious depth of meaning in His suffering. When we contemplate the Agony in the Garden we cannot be satisfied with the superficial view which sees in it a mere sudden shrinking from the newly-realized anguish of the morrow. The immense emphasis which our Lord Himself laid on the necessity of His sufferings reinforces the same lesson. When we come to S. Paul and S. John, the two representative theologians of the Apostolic Church, it is clear that to both of them the propitiatory character of the Passion was vital.

Are there any lines of thought which will enable us to see a short way into the mystery, and which will prevent it from seeming something at variance with our moral sense ? With the deepest reverence and intellectual humility we may perhaps venture on two such lines.

The first is connected with the representative character of our Lord's whole life. That character is something assigned to Him by the Father, and not by ourselves. Therefore it must not be confined to the fact already dwelt on that we may take Him for our Representative. The far deeper thought is that He takes us as His clients. As our Representative He feels Him-

[1] See the accounts of the institution of the Eucharist.

[2] S. Mark x. 45.

self to be what the human race as a matter of fact is. He identifies Himself with humanity. Realizing with vicarious shame the awfulness of sin, He will suffer as though guilty. He will play the penitent's part. He will endure the criminal's fate. He will not mock us by a display of impassive Deity, serenely superior to the self-chosen curse of the sinner, and calmly showing that to be good is to be happy. On the contrary He lays hold of human nature as it is, rejecting sinfulness indeed, but refusing none of its results, and in the end dying the characteristic death of the wicked with the added shame in Jewish eyes of 'hanging on the tree.' Looking up into the face of God He seems to say, 'Behold in Me sinful humanity realizing its sin and shame, and not refusing its natural result.'

And we must remember that our Lord did not leave us to guess at the meaning of the Cross. It was in the closest connection with the Cross that He uttered His tremendous words about the broken Body and the shed Blood. One of the greatest contributions which Catholic theology has made in recent years to our thought about the Atonement is the pointing out of the fact that apart from the Last Supper there would be almost nothing in the Gospels to define the object of our Lord's willingness to suffer. Then and there, it seems, He dedicated Himself to be a sacrificial Victim. Without such dedication it would be difficult to think of the

Cross as sacrificial at all. Perhaps, indeed, it would have been the sacrifice for the sins of the world just as truly if our Lord had never spoken the great words of sacrifice. That is a point which may be debated by the theologians. But it seems clear that we could never have known the sacrificial intention of our Lord if He had not clearly and audibly so consecrated Himself in the Upper Room. The savage scene of Calvary hardly suggests the culmination of all that had been dimly adumbrated by sacrificial worship the whole world over. But when our Lord, having taken bread and wine and consecrated them by thanksgiving, solemnly identified them with His Body given for His disciples and His Blood even then, so He said, being shed, there could be no more doubt about the way in which He meant us to think about the Cross. The Last Supper contains the ritual acts which stamped the character of sacrifice upon the morrow's sufferings, and made it abundantly clear that He Who spoke these words of power was not only Victim but also Priest.[1]

Again we must not forget that the Cross is an act of God in Manhood. We may not say that the Father suffered on the Cross ; but the Cross is an expression of the mind of God Himself, of God in His Fatherhood, His Sonship, His Spirithood. God did not look about for a victim. Rather He created a Humanity

[1] See *Essays Catholic and Critical*, pp. 430–439.

for Himself through which He might vindicate His own justice.

For the essence of retributive justice is not that the sinner should suffer pain. We should none of us be satisfied if trials for criminal offences took place *in camera* and if the sentences were never published. The essential thing is that public homage should be done to the principles of righteousness, and that somehow public and adequate apology should be made. The rough and ready ways of human justice achieve this end by publicly sentencing the criminal to suffer something which shall express society's abhorrence of the crime. If this cannot be done we can well imagine other ways of procedure. In the case of the judicial murder of Charles I, his successor after his restoration ordered the bodies of the regicides to be exhumed and hung in chains, and a special annual day of reparation to be observed as an expression of the nation's shame at the crime which had been committed. The example is, of course, a trivial one, and is only cited to illustrate the point that what the instinct of justice seems to demand is not mere retribution but the solemn vindication of righteousness. We need to do something to show what we feel about a horrible crime, and it must be something which in some way equals the horror of the crime itself. In the case of the martyr king (or, not to press the point, the king who was believed to be a martyr) the whole nation put itself to shame and

affliction to express its loathing of what certain other people had done, and justice received all the satisfaction that under the circumstances was possible.

So, in the case of the sin of the world, God takes upon Himself to do and suffer some awful thing which will satisfy all men, and also satisfy Himself that due notice has been taken of sin. Under every circumstance of publicity, with every precaution taken that all men might know what had happened, He allowed Himself to be gibbeted, He humilated Himself as an expression of the ultimate horror of sin. There was only one other way in which justice could be satisfied, and that would have been the punishment of the human race. But the object of that punishment would not have been that they might suffer adequately, but that their punishment should vindicate the majesty of righteousness. That object could be equally attained by the voluntary humiliation of the Son of God, and His claim to our love and gratitude is that of His own free will He chose the Cross for Himself, instead of decreeing for the human race that destruction which is the ultimate result of sin.

Now at last all is prepared for the true Atonement. God has spoken. God has acted. God in Manhood has returned to the Father by the sinner's path. The divine justice is vindicated. But all this is but preliminary to the actualization of God's gracious purposes. If it is really true that His intention is to give to us eternal

life, then some proof is needed that that life as lived out in its completeness by our Lord is really eternal. We need to know not only that it 'belongs to the heavenly order,' but also that it is indeed 'independent of the accidents of earthly existence.' That seems to be the necessity for the Resurrection. It is not merely the happy ending of the story. If that were all it would not even satisfy us artistically. Rather it is the necessary and inevitable climax, as necessary and inevitable as the Passion itself. 'It was not possible that He should be holden of' death.[1]

The actual evidence for the Resurrection of our Lord is manifold. It consists in the fact that a considerable number of His followers who had not the slightest expectation of any such event were within a few days of His death entirely convinced that they had both seen and spoken with Him. S. Paul sums up the record for us in his famous list in the first Epistle to the Corinthians,[2] which is an earlier authority than that of the Gospels. We may throw doubt on it if we will, but if it is not true it seems impossible to account for the astonishing change which comes over the disciples and indubitably dates from the third day after the Lord's death and burial. Something must have happened to transform these hitherto cowardly and rather stupid peasants, plunged, as all our authorities admit, in utter despair, into the

[1] Acts ii. 24. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 5–8.

brave and confident preachers of Jesus and the Resurrection with whom we are familiar from the first dawn of Christian history.

We cannot sweep away S. Paul's Epistles. Almost all of them are universally accepted by scholars as authentic writings of the Apostle himself. And strangely indifferent as he sometimes seems to our Lord's ministerial life and preaching, to His miracles and wonderful works, there can be no possible doubt that the Resurrection of the Lord is the keystone of his doctrine. Nor can we sweep away S. Luke, either as evangelist or as writer of the Acts. And S. Luke knows what history is, and what testimony is. The first few verses of his Gospel are one evidence of that, and the researches of modern scholars, confirming some of his most surprising statements, are another. Nor can we treat S. Mark as of no account. It is true that the concluding verses of his Gospel are lost,[1] but happily there is enough left to make us sure of the character of the Resurrection tradition as he had received it, and everything goes to support the universal belief of antiquity that S. Mark's Gospel is the testimony of S. Peter himself.[2]

As to all the main facts of the story, the evi-

[1] It seems probable that the substance of the lost ending of S. Mark is reproduced in the last chapter of S. Matthew.

[2] There is an admirable historical reconstruction of the events of Easter Day in Dr. N. P. Williams's *The First Easter Morning*.

dence speaks with one voice. There is enough variation to prove that the different traditions are independent of each other, but no variation whatever about the essential fact that Christ did appear after His death, and that in a moment sorrow and despair were turned into joy and confidence.

As to the nature of the Resurrection we need not inquire too curiously. The main point is that Jesus Christ has 'shown Himself alive after His Passion,' and that this life is not a dim and shadowy thing like the life of the under-world as it is portrayed by natural religion. On the contrary He seems, according to all the evidence, to have taken especial pains to make it clear that His life in the spiritual world is full, vigorous, and in every sense human. It is true that His appearances after the Resurrection have in some ways the character of visions. That is to say, He appears and disappears when and as He will. He is only recognized when He chooses to make Himself known. He is seen now here, now there. His bodily frame is not dependent on the laws of matter. But the appearances differ from mere visions in that they are revelations to all the senses. Men not only see, but hear and touch Him. He even eats in their presence. Whether we call the new Body material or not depends on what we mean by matter : and the fact is that we hardly know what we do mean. But when we speak of a spiritual body we mean something

that is more, not less, worthy of being called a body than any material structure of which we have any experience. Our Lord is now so perfectly embodied that bodily form and His powers of self-manifestation are perfectly under His own control, and entirely subject to His spirit.

Further, there is continuity between the Body as it was laid in the tomb and the renewed Body of the Resurrection. All our evidence lays stress on the empty sepulchre. Somehow then, it seems, the material Body was spiritualized. This may seem hard to believe. Yet in fact it is in harmony with all our experience that when a new order of life springs into being there should be continuity between it and the old. We need not really be hankering after a special creation theory to account for the new genus of *Homo spiritualis* of which the Risen Lord is the first progenitor. The more we learn about the constitution of matter the more we seem to see that after all forces rather than molecules are the ultimate things, and the complete subjection of these forces to spiritual ends in the Person of Christ is but the completion of a process which began when they were first organized for life, and then for mind, and then for spirit.

After the Resurrection, the Ascension. Our Lord's last parting from His disciples took the form of disappearance within a cloud. We are not obliged to picture the scene as crudely as

is sometimes done. Our Lord may have condescended to the beliefs of His time by actually rising into the air. It would be rash indeed to say that we are sure that He did not. But the actual records lay no stress on that. When we remember the cloud which was among the phenomena of the Transfiguration we see plainly that the mysterious cloud of the Ascension was not necessarily in the sky, and apart from the one phrase, 'He was taken up,' there is nothing in the accounts to suggest a skyward disappearance, except indeed the natural upward gazing of the simple-minded Apostles, when Master and cloud alike had vanished and they were left alone. It was the same thing as had happened after the Transfiguration, except that on that occasion it was Moses and Elijah who had disappeared, leaving 'Jesus only,' whereas now they seemed to be left alone indeed.[1]

We need not, then, hesitate to believe that Jesus Christ is alive to-day in that mysterious spiritual sphere which we call 'heaven.' Into this sphere He withdrew after the short period of forty days during which He was engaged in establishing the faith of His disciples. By His very presence there He pleads the cause of His clients here on earth. And though withdrawn from actual gaze He has become the ever-constant spring of eternal life to all who believe in Him. That life which He lived out to its

[1] See Acts i. 9–11, R.V. Note that the word 'up' of the A.V. is omitted in verse 10.

completeness, and in the strength of which He endured the assaults of His enemies, is now available for all who have submitted themselves to the power of His appeal, and have identified themselves with His self-consecration on the Cross. In Him they have eternal life. They know God progressively through prayer. They are united to Him with increasing closeness through the Sacraments. They are conscious of a growing power to do His will. They are in Christ and Christ in them. It is this relationship which is the heart of Christianity.

CHAPTER IV

GOD WITHIN

WHEN God became incarnate, 'He humbled Himself.' His earthly life reached, it might seem, the very extreme of humiliation. From an external point of view that is true. Nothing could be done to any one in the way of humiliation which was not done to the Son of God. His ultimate Self is Love; and His passion for self-expression was such that He was moved irresistibly to manifest love to the utmost, even where it seemed only too clear that the result of the manifestation would only be rejection and contumely. All this is typified most truly and most poignantly by the nakedness in which He ascended the Cross.

But by His very nature God was impelled to seek a lower depth. The divine nature implies not only self-expression, but self-impression. He is not only 'Word' but also 'Spirit.' He desires to mould us into His own image, so far as that is possible for human beings. And this can only be done from within. A machine is repaired by external manipulation. Even with a living animal the same is true to some extent. But a responsible personality cannot be dealt with

in this way, on pain of being deprived of the very thing that makes it what it is. If God is to have His way with us, it is not enough for Him to show us Himself from without : He must also mingle Himself with the inner springs of life and will and consciousness, and He must do all this without abolishing our own individual responsibility. God must stand suppliant at the gate of the interior castle of the human soul, ready to come in and make His abode there, but ready also to be rejected and kept out.

This is the supreme evidence of that Love which is the essence of Godhead, and the supreme example of His readiness to go all lengths to carry out His purpose for humanity. And it is not only rejection that He faces. Just as in the days of the earthly life of Christ His deepest shame came from the unworthiness of His chosen Apostles, so to-day it is those who have admitted God to the inner sanctuary of their lives who have the greatest power to humiliate Him. It is a commonplace to point out that the inconsistencies of Christians are the shame of Christianity.

The interior life of the Christian is the work of the Holy Ghost. As by the Incarnation God came forth and lived a visible life among men, so by the mystery of Pentecost He came forth anew and began to live an invisible life within men. The 'gift of the Holy Ghost' is the sequel to the Ascension of Christ.

It is difficult to be sure how much He Himself really did say beforehand about this new and

wonderful presence of God within mankind. Chapters xiv–xvi of S. John give great prominence to the promise of 'the Comforter,' and there is no reason to doubt that our Lord did make that promise explicitly after the Last Supper. But it is almost universally believed by scholars that the author of the Gospel has translated our Lord's words into a form which is deeply tinged with his own mentality, and with the experience of the Pentecostal Church. Apart from S. John there is very little to be found within the actual limits of the Gospels. And what there is does not seem to refer so much to the special gift of Pentecost as to the general interior working of God in the human soul. Zacharias and S. John the Baptist are 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' and our Lord assures us that the Father will 'give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.' There are, however, two instances which may perhaps be looked on as anticipations of the Pentecostal gift. One is the coming of the Holy Ghost to the Blessed Virgin, and the other is His descent upon our Lord Himself at His Baptism. Both of these seem to stand by themselves. Apart from them the principle is that laid down by S. John: 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given' (literally, 'Holy Spirit was not yet'), 'because that Jesus was not yet glorified.'[1]

The whole object of the Pentecostal gift is to make over to those who wish to be like our

[1] S. John vii. 39.

Lord the gift of union with His glorified Humanity, and the powers which that Humanity had wielded when on earth. He desires His Church to be as it were a second Christ. So, S. John tells us, His first official action after the Resurrection is to give to His Apostles a gift of the Holy Spirit which should empower them to act as His ambassadors in that most characteristic of all His beneficent acts, the forgiveness of sins. But there is still something to come. It was not until after the Ascension that the full gift was available, and in the interval during which our Lord still walked the earth He began to speak of that new gift which was to be theirs : a gift of which the clearest quality was power. This is stated very clearly in the first chapter of Acts, which is the second volume of S. Luke's Gospel.

On the Day of Pentecost He redeemed His promise. The new gift was to be the corporate possession of the Church. For that reason, we may suppose, God waited till a day when all should be 'together in one place.' Such a day was the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, when it was certain that all who could gather at Jerusalem would do so. When all was ready the great creative act of God took place. The strange external phenomena which adorned it are not the important matter. Mysterious lights and sounds and ecstasies are not unknown as the accompaniment of intense spiritual experience. The essence of Pentecost is a new relationship

to God. From that day forward no Christian had ever any doubt that the essential thing that made the difference between a Christian and another man was that the Christian had received the Holy Ghost and the other man had not.[1]

There is an arresting contrast between the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament in this matter. The Gospels are the story of God living an exterior life among men. The rest of the New Testament is the story of God living a hidden life within certain men, chosen, called, and consecrated for that purpose. The Pentecostal gift is the perpetual endowment of the Church, and to join the Church is to be made partaker of it. Thus every Baptism, with its sequel of Confirmation by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, is as it were another Pentecost, and, as with Pentecost, it is the unseen operation of God Himself which is the important thing. The Christian is one who has God dwelling within him in virtue of his having received the Holy Ghost.

Now what is the meaning of this 'indwelling'? We are rather inclined to think of 'within' and 'without' as only applicable to material things, and to speak of our souls as though we each lived in a separate *camera*

[1] This, of course, is not to say that the Holy Ghost does not influence the non-Christian. This would be to make conversion impossible (see pp. 193f.). But the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is the specific endowment of the Christian who is in a 'state of grace' (see chap. x).

obscura of our own, observing other people, but entirely independent of them. But the truth surely is that we are not nearly so independent as we like to think ourselves. An entirely solitary individual would be sub-human. It is only by entering into relations with others that we ever come to ourselves : and as we so enter into relations we are conscious that the relationship is making a subtle alteration in ourselves. It is not only our imagination which is thus altered, but our whole outlook and our very will and individuality. It is not for nothing that we call this ' influence,' i.e. the inflowing of one personality into another. ' Virtue,' a certain indefinable force, has entered into us. Souls are not like so many marbles ; they interpenetrate each other. If this is true of our relationship with finite individuals, it is far more true of our relationship with God. It is only by entering into relations with Him that we come to our real selves. This no doubt applies to all men everywhere ; but the special truth about Christians is the extraordinary intimacy of this relationship. God has revealed Himself in Christ : He has united us to Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

The office of the Holy Ghost, then, is to make interior to the soul that which has hitherto been apprehended as an exterior revelation. It is for this reason that S. Paul speaks indifferently of the indwelling of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and in one case even seems

to speak as though the indwelling Christ and the Holy Ghost were the same.[1] It is Christ Who dwells in us by means of the Holy Ghost, Who in one passage is actually spoken of as 'the Spirit of Jesus.'[2]

Not that there is really any confusion between the divine 'Persons,' since we must use that word. It is merely that they never act separately. Every divine act is an act of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though not the same act in relation to the Three. God the Father did not suffer on the Cross, yet the Cross is the expression of the mind of the Father towards mankind, and towards sin. The Eternal Spirit did not suffer on the Cross, yet it was through Him our Lord offered Himself. Whatever else we imagine we must not let ourselves slip into thinking of the Persons of the Trinity as three independent First Principles, or three independent Centres of action. So then, when we say that the Holy Spirit indwells the soul, that does not contradict the indwelling of God Incarnate. On the contrary it implies it.

The primary truth is that it is the Holy Ghost Who enters into the human spirit ; but because He does so, therefore Christ is no longer external to us ; He indwells us by means of the Spirit. So also, although the Holy Spirit is God Himself, yet He retains His distinction from the Fountain of all Being, Whom we call the Father. The God within strains and

[1] Rom. viii. 9, 10. [2] Acts xvi. 7.

aspires towards the God above. Deep calls to Deep. The human soul, magnetized by the presence of the Spirit, attracts, and is attracted by, the consubstantial Father. The action of the Spirit implies and involves the corresponding, but not identical, actions of the Father and the Son.

Along such lines as these it seems possible to get an answer to the question, 'What is the good of being a Christian?' If to be a Christian is to have received the Holy Ghost, it is not so difficult to see what ought at least to be the result of it.

And we must put first what our Lord put first. To be a Christian is to have power. Like all gifts of the Spirit, this power is our own, yet not our own. Its source is most certainly not from within our own narrow personality. Rather in most cases we cannot enter on the experience of God's power without having first had sad reason to know our own weakness.

It would be an exaggeration to say that this is theoretically necessary. There is no reason in the nature of things why one who has received the Holy Spirit by Baptism into the Church in infancy should not retain unblemished the gifts of grace then imparted to the soul, and simply progress through life from strength to strength. But usually, we know too well, it is not so. We have to learn, most of us, by stern or even bitter experience that our power to serve and please God comes from Him and

not from ourselves. And most often our lesson comes through the consciousness of failure.

Nor do most of us learn this lesson once for all as S. Paul did. In his case the story is blazoned out in letters of gigantic size. Never was there a greater success in keeping the letter of the law ; never so great a failure as he realized himself to be when he came to measure his life against the standard which he found to be implied by its spirit. Then came his conversion : and the result of that was simply that he ceased to make any claim whatever on his own behalf. Henceforth everything must be accepted from God ; pardon first and righteousness afterwards. S. Paul learnt the lesson once for all. He never looked back. Henceforward he lived and walked in the Spirit.

But with most of us it is otherwise. There may indeed be less Pharisaic pride at the beginning ; but correspondingly our conversion is less real, and again and again we find ourselves seriously thinking that we have something to boast about, and again and again the result is the same : power has deserted us. It never was our own. We presumed to think it was, and at once we had lost all claim to it. Then it became only a question of time : sooner or later temptation would arrive and find us unprotected. Humble faith—itself, as S. Paul reminds us, a divine gift—is utterly necessary if we are to retain spiritual power. And faith in this sense is simply the grasping hold of the

Spirit of God, and letting Him fight our battles for us. It is the virtue of the drowning man who perishes if he tries to save himself, and is saved only if he gives up his will to his rescuer.

A Christian, then, is, or should be, one who is able to resist temptation and live the life that God intends for him by relying on a power which, though so closely united to him as to be part of himself, yet has its source in God and not in himself.

But this sense of divine power interpenetrating the soul comes to its own even more clearly in the activity of prayer. Christian prayer is an act of God. The paradox is not too violent. The first result of the Spirit's coming was not, as is so often supposed, preaching, but praying: the telling forth 'the wonderful works of God' in ecstatic tones of praise. And so S. Paul would have us recognize that the Holy Spirit is ever beforehand with us in our feeble efforts to hold communion with God; it is He Who 'maketh intercession for us.' If our prayer often seems but inarticulate, that is no more than should be expected. S. Paul speaks of Christian prayer as 'groanings which cannot be uttered.' We are under the sway, he seems to mean, of a Power Who cannot as yet make Himself intelligible to us. But 'he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.'[1] God understands, because in truth this strange unintelligible welling up of aspiration and desire

[1] Rom. viii. 26, 27.

is no less than the striving of a divine power to express itself within the human heart.

So that the characteristic Christian prayer, like the characteristic Christian active life, is of the nature of self-surrender. Yet this self-surrender in the end turns out to be intensely active, just because it is surrender not to an external power but to God, Who has taken us into Himself and given Himself to us. The Holy Spirit's activity is the activity of spirits inspired by Him. We dare not let ourselves fall into what has been called quietism, which means the deliberate stilling of all activity in the soul when we desire to pray. To do that is to forget that intermingling of God with the human soul which we have seen to be the characteristic gift of Christianity. The Christian at prayer is, or should be, intensely active : yet he knows that the activity is not in the last resort his own work, but the work of God within him.

Akin to this is the function of the Holy Spirit as the Consecrator of the human personality. The human body, S. Paul teaches, is a temple, because the Spirit that indwells it is divine. Once more we see the characteristic inter-penetration of spirits which is the mark of the work of the Third Divine Person. The human personality is not swamped by the presence of God within. It is sanctified. It is still the human self which is expressed by bodily activities, but a human self which is coming to maturity by interior contact with God.

The Christian, then, is one whose life, bodily as well as spiritually, is surrendered to God. He lives not for his own private purposes, but for God's universal purposes. He is not only temple but priest. The object of his life is to enable God to come to His own. By submitting to God's consecrating power he becomes a channel through which God may make Himself felt in the world. And this surely corresponds with all our experience as to the method of God's working. Divine influence is, as a matter of fact, exercised almost entirely through consecrated personalities. Most of us are fortunate enough to know some people who radiate divine influence. It is not so much what they say or do as what they *are* which makes us feel that to have dealings with them is to have to do with God. What we feel about them is not so much that they are servants of God, or imitators of Christ, as that God Himself dwells within them. Up to the measure of their capacity they have opened their hearts and surrendered their wills to the Holy Ghost, and to them is given, according to the divine promise, ' good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and ' only in the end ' flowing over ' because their capacity is limited.[1]

But this interpenetration of spirit between God and ourselves is not the same as confusion. The Holy Ghost is the Player ; the soul is the instrument; the resulting melody proceeds

[1] S. Luke vi. 38.

from the One through the other. And when there is discord instead of harmony it is the Player Who is first sensible of it. As our Lord in the days of His humiliation was capable of feeling all kinds of human grief and pain, so His most Holy Spirit, working within the human soul, is 'grieved' whenever there is no response. He is one Person, the Christian is another. When all goes well, He and His instrument may seem part of each other (as we say of a good rider, 'He seems part of his horse'); but when the instrument fails Him it becomes only too clear that the human side is by no means lost in the divine.

Are we, then, coming to the position that the object of religion is to enslave the human will and that it is only the rebel soul which is really free? No, indeed! That would be to mistake the whole meaning of freedom. The only kind of freedom that is worth having is the freedom of the soul which is achieving its own highest aim. The only real slavery is that of the soul which has to cry: 'The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.'[1] And it is precisely from this wretched state that the Christian religion offers us deliverance. 'The wind,' says our Lord, according to S. John, 'bloweth where it listeth. . . . So is every one that is born of the Spirit.'[2] The point of the comparison is that in Greek the same word is used for 'wind' and for 'Spirit.' The

[1] Rom. vii. 19. [2] S. John iii. 8.

Spirit-born soul is as free as the wind, as free as the Spirit Who indwells it. The indwelling of the Spirit enables a man to be his true self for the first time, introduces him for the first time to the service which is perfect freedom.

Here, then, at last we come to the truth about eternal life. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost. If we were right in our analysis [1] of eternal life into the three elements of knowledge, union, and power, it is clear that to have the Holy Ghost is to have eternal life. It is the Holy Ghost Who opens the eyes of the soul to appreciate and enter into the revelation of God in Christ. It is the Holy Ghost Who enters into the inmost recesses of our personality and imparts to us there the life and the merits of God Incarnate. And it is the Holy Ghost Who bestows that power to do our duty which is the object, as it should be the token, of our adoption into the number of the children of God.

[1] See pp. 38 f.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH

THE Holy Ghost plays on man as on an instrument. But the instruments He uses are as various as human nature itself. There is no one kind of man who is suited to Christianity. The divine symphony requires orchestration before it can be appreciated in its fullness.

If this is true, we must hold that the idea of the Church is part of the essence of Christianity. That will seem a hard saying to those who have made up their minds that ecclesiasticism is what has spoiled Christianity. The very word 'Church' is in some minds associated with the ideas of bigotry, reaction, and obscurantism, or again of prudery, drabness, repression, and boredom. There may be a good deal of truth in all that; organized religion has its own special diseases; they are extraordinarily prevalent and virulently contagious. Our Lord Himself denounced them vigorously; they were, indeed, the immediate cause of His death.

Using, for convenience, the names of Jewish sects, we may say that the chief ecclesiastical diseases are four in number: Pharisaism, Sadduceeism, Zealotry, and Herodianism. Pharisaism

is self-satisfied, partisan, interfering, narrow-minded, and immersed in petty scruples to the neglect of the greater things such as justice, charity, and mercy. Sadduceeism is more concerned for privilege than prayer, for 'establishment' than for spirituality. It combines a deep-rooted scepticism with a readiness to observe the outward forms and phrases of religion. Zealotry is quarrelsome, and is ready to assert the rights of the Church at the slightest provocation. Herodianism is courtier religion, corrupted by toadyism and worldliness.

Corruptio optimi pessima. There are few things that leave a nastier taste in the mouth than religion which has 'gone bad': and the nobler the religion the more nauseous the decay. There is nothing surprising in the fact that men are inclined to ask for Christianity without the Church.

Yet in truth there is no such thing. Christianity issued forth from a people to whom a private and individual religion would have been a meaningless conception. Our Lord Himself, in spite of His ruthless dealings with ecclesiastical corruption, was religiously, if we may dare say so, an enthusiastic Jew. He offered Himself to His own people as the promised and predestined Saviour, and when the people as a whole would have none of Him, He set to work to organize a brotherhood which should be the nucleus of a new Israel, founded on a new corporate covenant between God and His special people.

This is most clear in regard to the actual group of the Apostles to whose training He devoted so much of the time of His ministry : but there is every appearance of His other followers being made to feel that they also were members of a brotherhood. There seem to have been definitely appointed rendezvous for them from time to time by the lake-side, and it has even been suggested with some probability that as soon as John the Baptist was imprisoned our Lord Himself took up his ministry of baptism.[1] In any case S. Luke speaks more than once of a ' multitude of disciples,' and it is clear that at the final cleansing of the Temple our Lord had a group of more or less declared followers at His back.[2] The fact, moreover, of the post-Resurrection appearance to five hundred brethren, vouched for by S. Paul [3] as part of the original tradition taught to him after his conversion, is very strong evidence for a definite group of disciples apart from the Twelve.

Pentecost, then, we have reason to believe,

[1] See an article in *Theology*, May, 1928, by V. MacMunn, on ' The Two Ministries of Christ : (1) The Baptizing Ministry.'

[2] S. Matthew, of course, tells us that He definitely spoke of founding a ' Church,' and sent His followers to ' make disciples of all nations ' (*S. Matt.* xvi. 18 ; xxviii. 19) ; but, in view of the doubts of some critical scholars about these passages it is wiser not to lay too much stress upon them.

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 6.

found a loosely organized society of people ready to receive its gifts and blessings. There were a certain number, 'about a hundred and twenty,'[1] actually in Jerusalem, and some hundreds besides, presumably in Galilee. In addition there were the eleven original Apostles, and closely associated with them the new Apostle, S. Matthias. The Eleven had already been given a position of unique authority, not only by their association with our Lord, but, according to S. John,[2] by a special preliminary gift of the Holy Ghost conferring on them disciplinary powers over the society. Doubts may no doubt be raised as to the exact words assigned to our Lord in this connection; but there are also His earlier sayings about binding and loosing,[3] and in any case the undisputed authority which they wield from the beginning makes it clear that their position was unassailable in this respect. Quite obviously they are the divinely appointed rulers of the Christian group. Their commands are obeyed without question, and 'of the rest durst no man join himself unto them.'[4]

On a group, then, with this much of organization there descended, according to our Lord's promise, His own most Holy Spirit.

It is probably best not to speak of Pentecost as 'the birthday of the Church.' There had been a 'Church,' an 'elect people of God,' ever since the original call of Abraham, and the

[1] Acts i. 15. [2] S. John xx. 22, 23.
[3] S. Matt. xviii. 18; cf. xvi. 19. [4] Acts v. 13.

whole story of Israel is Church history. But in the mind of the followers of our Lord this national Jewish Church had failed to respond to God's choice. Just as in former days the vast majority of the nation had fallen away into idolatry and only a small remnant had remained faithful, so now the Jews as a whole had rejected their Messiah, and the true elect people were once more to be sought in the small group who had been called out by Him from the general body of the people and had responded to His call. They were the true inheritors of the promise to Abraham. But it was not Pentecost that brought this remnant into being. It was already there, formed and organized by Christ Himself, and only waiting to receive by means of the Pentecostal gift the promised endowment for its great work. Pentecost was not the beginning of the Church ; it was its coming of age and the inheritance of its new spiritual life. For, as we have seen, it marks the beginning of an altogether new relationship between God and man ; and from the first moment it is clear that this relationship depends on man being brought into covenant with God by membership in a body.

This is the Gospel as expounded by S. Peter in his first sermon as a minister of Christ in Acts ii. His hearers, he assures them, can receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Ghost by repentance and Baptism. As to the primary meaning of Baptism there could be no doubt.

It was a penitential act, but also it made a man a member of the Christian community. It was as it had ever been ; God's gifts and promises were not for man in isolation but for man as member of a chosen people. From the very first we find in germ all the characteristic functions of the Catholic Church : Baptism, Confirmation, public Penance, Holy Communion, Preaching both to the converted and the unconverted, and the social life of a clearly-defined brotherhood. Nothing could be sharper than the distinction between a Christian and a non-Christian, and the dividing line was Baptism ' into the Name of the Lord Jesus.'

THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH

I. APOSTOLIC

The government of the new society was in the hands of those whom our Lord Himself had appointed as His Apostles, and to whose training He had devoted so much care. Among these it is quite clear that S. Peter had a dominating position. He is in all respects their leader and their spokesman. Quite apart from any questions of later controversy it is beyond dispute that our Lord did give to S. Peter a certain primacy, and that He made it abundantly clear that this special position was not forfeited by his denials. How much actual authority he had over the other Apostles was not a question likely to arise under the idealistic conditions of the first

few years of the life of the Christian Church, but it was not long before serious disputes began to disturb the peace of the Church. The conversion of the highly-educated Pharisee, Saul, was destined to have far-reaching effects upon the character of the 'new Israel.' The question had to be faced whether Christianity was to be a Jewish sect or a community as wide as humanity itself. In actual fact the first decisive step which implied the latter alternative was taken under divine guidance by S. Peter,[1] but in the acute controversy which arose about this matter it is abundantly clear that he was by no means exempt from criticism from both sides. Indeed, the full perception of the significance of his action, and the consistent working of it out in practice, must be attributed almost entirely to the new Apostle, S. Paul.

On a casual reading of the Acts of the Apostles we might even conclude that as time went on the primacy of the Church passed from S. Peter's hands to those of S. Paul. But to put it as strongly as that would be a misreading of history. What actually happened was that S. Peter and S. Paul agreed to divide their labours, the former making himself responsible for Jewish Christians, the latter for Gentiles.[2] The book of the Acts of the Apostles in its later chapters is concerned with the spread of the Faith through the Gentile world, and therefore naturally resolves itself, from chapter xiii

[1] Acts x. [2] Gal. ii. 7–9.

onwards, into the 'Acts of Paul.' No doubt the 'Acts of Peter' during the same period would prove a record of equally authoritative, though perhaps less exciting, pastoral care. Still, when all allowances have been made, it would not be too much to say that the primitive records suggest a twofold primacy from about A.D. 50, rather than the individual rule of S. Peter; and from the historic point of view it would seem as though the pre-eminence of the later papacy could have been more securely based on the super-apostolic position of the two founders of the Church of the Imperial City than on the extremely uncertain tradition that S. Peter was himself the first Bishop of Rome.[1] On the other hand, it must be recognized that of the two Apostolic primates it was S. Peter who owed his position to the direct appointment of our Lord. It might therefore be maintained (but rather artificially) that while S. Paul was appointed to the apostolate by our Lord in

[1] The tradition, if such it can be called, is first found in S. Jerome, towards the end of the fourth century. The earlier idea was always that Rome was the inheritor of the authority of the two great Apostles. The dropping out of S. Paul was presumably due to a desire to make the fullest possible use of the 'Petrine texts' as buttresses of the papal position. But there is a very fine 'Pauline text' which has had to be sacrificed in consequence: 'There is that which presseth upon me daily, the care of all the Churches' (2 *Cor.* xi. 28). As a matter of fact, however, authoritative papal documents are still issued under the names of 'the holy Apostles Peter and Paul.'

person, as he always claimed, his special position as the Apostle *par excellence* of the Gentiles was delegated to him by S. Peter.

We can say with some confidence that the Church has from the first been governed by the Apostles themselves or by their nominees. That the Apostles should gradually delegate their divinely-given authority is only what we should expect, and we can trace the process by which they did so with sufficient accuracy. It very soon became necessary for them to divest themselves of certain administrative and semi-secular functions connected with the administration of relief, and it is not unnatural to see in the appointment of the Seven the beginnings of what is now the Order of Deacons. But a far more urgent necessity lay on them to provide for purely spiritual ministrations, and though we have no such definite account of the appointment of the first 'elders,' or 'bishops,'[1] it is taken for granted in S. Luke's account, (1) that they are appointed in every church by Apostolic authority,[2] (2) that they have, 'under the Apostles,' full pastoral authority over, and responsibility for, the Church in their own towns,[3] (3) that they are associated with the Apostles themselves for counsel and debate.[4]

How the present system of one 'bishop' as the president of the local group of elders, and

[1] The two terms are synonymous, or almost so, in the New Testament.

[2] Acts xiv. 23. [3] ibid., xx. 28–35. [4] ibid., xv. 6, 22.

the sole authority for ordaining new ones, arose is not so clear. It seems probable, and it is certainly only natural, that the Apostles would hesitate at first to leave the authority to ordain other elders in the hands of newly-founded Churches, and therefore would not at once make provision for the continuance of the ministry. It must, of course, be remembered that for a good many years all Christians were convinced that our Lord was shortly going to appear in glory, and that therefore all Church organization must be of a purely temporary character. There is no evidence whatever that any group of elders ever received authority to ordain other elders. It is possible no doubt, and if they did receive such authority from the Apostles they would of course have exercised it. But what evidence we have goes the other way. There is some doubt as to the authorship of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, so that we cannot press their testimony right up to the hilt. But as far as they go they justify us in saying that according to the evidence the ordaining authority in the Church has always been in the hands of one person, not of a group. It is the laying on of S. Paul's hands through which spiritual power came to S. Timothy,[1] though, as in modern times, the other presbyters joined in the act.[2] And

[1] 2 Tim. i. 6. But the late Dr. Chase is followed by some scholars in holding that the 'gift' here referred to is that of Confirmation.

[2] 1 Tim. iv. 14.

S. Titus's position in Crete was given to him in order that he might not only 'set in order the things that are wanting' but also 'appoint elders in every city.'[1]

Forty years later we find S. Ignatius of Antioch asserting with extraordinary vehemence the necessity of one bishop, as well as elders and deacons, in every place.[2] When we compare this with the testimony of the Pastoral Epistles it does not seem unreasonable to hold that from the beginning every Church that had passed out of the purely missionary stage had its own president, known from the second century onwards as the bishop, and that until such a president had been appointed no new elders could be made except by the Apostles themselves.

On the other hand, it is possible that at first the whole group of elders in any place had power to add to their own number by a corporate act of Ordination. If this really was the case, then of course the authority so passed on was Apostolic authority. The ordaining power was, so to say, put into commission. But it would be very rash to infer from this that the power of perpetuating itself is inherent in the pastoral office, so that whenever a group of presbyters agree to ordain some one, that is sufficient to ensure that he has valid orders. We may well be thankful that God clearly does make use of ministries founded on the presbyterian theory, and indeed of many ministries founded on

[1] Titus i. 5. [2] *Ad Trall.* iii.

theories far more lax than this ; but if there is such a thing as the Apostolic authority still active in the Church it seems that it is our business to be as sure as possible that we are submitting ourselves to it.

The Church, then, was from the beginning, and is by her essential nature, ' Apostolic,' and that not merely in the vague sense of ' missionary,' but with the definite meaning of endued with the Apostolic authority, differentiated by the will of God into lay members and Apostolic ministers.

This authority may be thought of as threefold, corresponding with the three Messianic offices of our Lord—prophetic, priestly, and royal. Ideally this threefold authority is held by the whole Church, but for most practical purposes it is exercised by the Apostolic ministry.

When we say that the Church has prophetic authority, we do not mean that she is empowered to give oracular decisions on every problem that may be submitted to her, nor, it need hardly be said, that she has any power of foretelling the future. We mean that she is entrusted with the treasure of certain divine truths for the keeping of which she is responsible. That may seem a comparatively simple charge, calling for little more than diligent care that they are not added to or diminished from. But it is not so simple as all that. The truths of the Christian Faith are not like so many solid

coins which can be hidden in a napkin and buried in the earth. Doctrine is a living thing, which grows and develops. If we could keep all religious truth in one compartment and separate it rigidly from secular truth, it would be an easy matter to sift every new way of expressing it, and see whether it conflicted with the original deposit. But there is no such sharp dividing line, and it is idle to say that philosophy and science make no difference to the way in which we hold the Faith. What is to be the reaction of Christian faith to the theory of evolution, to new philosophies of time and space, to new educational methods, to the Copernican system of astronomy, to historical science, to forms of government, to the rights of man, to the rights of woman, to its own spiritual experience?

There seem to be four distinguishable uses which the Church has to make of her didactic or prophetic authority.

First she has to decide between conflicting ways of stating the truth. We often speak of the 'development' of doctrine. But in early ages this development was not so much a mere matter of drawing out the implications of a doctrine already held and formulated. It was in some ways more comparable to the development of species in the natural world by means of struggle and the survival of the fittest. That is the explanation of the extraordinary variety which we discover in the statement of dogmatic

truths in the first centuries of our era. If, for example, we study the early history of the doctrine of the Trinity, we shall find a continual conflict between Trinitarianism and what Dr. Kirk has called 'Binitarianism,' until at last it is seen how far more adequate is the former than the latter as a way of describing the mystery of the God head as it has been made known to us.[1] To-day a 'Binitarian' would be a heretic. It is by no means so clear that he would have been one in the second century.

But, secondly, the Church must supervise the 'development' of doctrine in the other sense. She has to recognize what are the implications of doctrine which she already holds. Much of the Eucharistic theology of the later Church is of this character.

Thirdly, she has to decide how much of the teaching which she has been accustomed to give really does belong to the substance of the truth entrusted to her, and is therefore to be maintained at all costs, and how much, if any, merely belongs to the temporary envelope. An instance of the kind of question which arises under this head is the attitude which should be adopted towards the literary and historical criticism of the Bible.

Finally, she has to act as the practical guide of her children in many intellectual and moral perplexities even though she may not be pre-

[1] See *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*. Ed. A. E. J. Rawlinson.

pared to decide with any confidence the questions which are puzzling a particular generation.

All this represents a very complex situation. It is all very well to speak about 'the Church,' as though one could easily and at once ascertain the Church's mind on any question whatsoever. It is tempting to wish that one could. It may not be ungenerous to suggest that it is partly this desire for a comparatively easy and automatic certainty which makes the Papal system so very attractive to some minds. Yet perhaps it is better after all not to be too anxious for a premature decision on points on which there may still be new evidence. We may well believe that when the Church, with all the evidence before her, really does affirm that such and such a thing is part of the essence of the Faith we can but bow our heads as before the verdict of the Holy Ghost, but it is by no means easy to be sure of the conditions which will give us certain knowledge of the mind of the Church in each particular instance.

There are certain cases which do seem to be clear. We cannot go back on the dogmatic teaching of an Ecumenical Council, for instance, without seeming to deny the assistance of the Holy Ghost as promised to the Church. But even an Ecumenical Council is not an oracular method of arriving at the truth. Any group of bishops can hold a Council; but it remains to be seen whether the general sense of the faithful will consider it ecumenical. This, one might

think, is the point at which we might very naturally rely on the presidential chair of the Holy See to give a ruling on the matter. If ecclesiastical circumstances were normal nothing could be more proper than that the President of the College of Bishops should decide whether or no a particular Council really represented the mind of the whole body. But as things are, with half the Christian world unrecognized by the Pope, it is impossible for those outside his communion to be confident of finding in him the unquestionable registrar of the mind of the Church. It seems that we must be content to grope in some matters about which we would like to have certainty, until we have composed our differences and can really find ourselves one Church again. After all, the seven Councils, the Creeds, the Scriptures do give us sufficient guidance to go on with. And the fact that the Church cannot speak on all subjects with infallible authority does not mean that she has no authority. And however united we were, the Church has never been promised the gift of ascertaining new truth.

Further, the Church has priestly authority. It need hardly be said that just as there is ultimately no sacrifice except the sacrifice of Christ, so also there is ultimately no priesthood but His. The only question that can be raised is whether or no He exercises His priestly functions through the Church. But the outstanding function of the priest is the offering

of sacrifice, and the whole life of the Church is sacrificial. She is the Body of the Priest-Victim Himself. She exists only as a body continually offered to God. The sacrificial character of her life culminates in the holy Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, a mystery which contains within itself the fulfilment of every kind of sacrifice known to the ancient Church of Jewry; burnt-offering, and sin-offering, and peace-offering, and covenant, and first-fruits, and Passover all in one; but contains them not as so many different kinds of sacrifice but as the perpetual representation of the universal Sacrifice of Christ. The Church, 'ordained for men in things pertaining to God,' exercises on earth the priesthood which belongs to Christ. As the whole Church is priestly, so those who are ordained to lead the sacrificial worship of the Church are priests in the special ministerial sense. It is they, and they alone, who actually with their own lips and hands perpetuate the awful transaction of the Upper Room and the Cross and the heavenly Altar. In this sense they may rightly be called 'priests.'

It must not be thought that this ministerial priesthood in any way derogates from the right of individual access of all Christians to our Lord. The official priesthood is concerned with what is no less important, our corporate access to Him. For a corporate act it is necessary to have a representative of the whole body, and the right to preside at the Christian sacrifice has

always, so far as our evidence goes, been jealously confined to those who have been specially chosen and set apart to represent the Church to God and to represent Christ to the Church.

Further, the Church possesses regal authority. Nothing could be clearer in the New Testament than the fact that the Apostles expected the lay people to do as they were told. This does not mean that they laid upon them the duty of dumb and blind obedience. It is S. Luke's manner in the Acts to give one full description of typical events, and leave it to be concluded that other events of the same class corresponded to it. Thus he describes fully one Ordination,[1] one Confirmation,[2] and also one disciplinary council.[3] At this council we observe that the disciplinary authority rests with 'the Apostles and elders.' Yet they do not meet with closed doors, but in the presence of 'the multitude,' and it is clear that the speakers are anxious to have the goodwill and approval of this multitude as well as of their colleagues in the ranks of the clergy. But in the last resort the Apostolic authority is peremptory and absolute, and in the absence of the Apostles it is exercised by their delegates, the elders,[4] and of course far more completely by quasi-Apostles like S. Timothy and S. Titus. The consciousness of being the final earthly authority

[1] Acts vi. 3–6. [2] ibid., viii. 14–17. [3] ibid., xv. 6–29.
[4] See Acts xx. 28–31.

over his own converts is very clear in S. Paul's own mind.[1] He is prepared, if necessary, to excommunicate 'in the name of the Lord Jesus,'[2] or equally to absolve 'in the person of Christ.'[3]

The bishops, then, as the governing body of the Church, claim power to make laws or canons for the Church, and to enforce those which have been made. In actual fact, however, owing to the divisions of Christendom, this law-making power of the whole Church cannot now be exercised. The time for General Councils legislating for the Church has gone by, though no doubt in the event of a real reunion of Catholic Christendom it would be revived. As things are, from our own point of view in the Anglican Communion[4] a real General Council seems impossible, because of the divided condition of the Church. In the Roman Catholic Church the authority of the Pope has been practically substituted for that of councils in the disciplinary sphere; and, as regards the Eastern Church, though there has been talk of the assembling of a Pan-Orthodox Synod for the discussion of ecclesiastical discipline, the political difficulties at present seem insuperable. The importance of the Ecumenical Councils is doctrinal rather than disciplin-

[1] 2 Cor. x. 8; xiii. 10. [2] 1 Cor. v. 3. [3] 2 Cor. ii. 10.

[4] From the Roman point of view the Vatican Council of 1870 was, as is well known, ecumenical: and it is said that it is likely to be convoked again in the near future.

ary ; and such disciplinary canons as were enacted by them have largely lapsed into desuetude. In the non-papal parts of the Church legislative functions are mostly exercised by local groups of bishops, passing canons which affect their own provinces. These canons are authoritative within the province, unless of course they conflict either with ecumenical law or custom, or with the divine law. An individual bishop can also by a formal act, after consulting his own clergy in the diocesan synod, make canons for his diocese, always assuming that they are not contrary to rules already laid down by a higher authority.

But the regal power of the Church is also exercised in the administration, and, if necessary, the enforcement both of divine and ecclesiastical law. The Apostolic power of binding and loosing is exercised primarily through the bishops, to some extent also through priests. While it is true that only the authority which made the law can abrogate it, necessity dictates that the representative of the Church must have some power of dispensation. Dispensation is not the same as abrogation. It is interpretative rather than legislative. It is in essence a ruling that under certain circumstances a particular law is not binding on a particular person or class of persons. Ordinarily this will be for the reason that in this special case it comes into conflict with a higher law. Thus ecclesiastical law must always give way either to

the universal law of God or to positive Divine precept.

But supposing there has been a breach of law, how is the regal power of the Church to be exercised ? Here there is an important distinction to be made between two spiritual tribunals, known respectively as the *forum externum* and the *forum internum*.

The *forum externum* is the public exercise of the bishop's jurisdiction in cases where offences against the law have come to his knowledge in an ordinary way. If the offence is such that it is his obvious duty to take notice of it, he will of course, unless it is very serious, use all possible methods of suasion to bring the offender to a better mind before proceeding to actual disciplinary measures. If suasion fails, or if the offence is so serious that public punishment has to be inflicted in order to vindicate the Church's sense of justice, the bishop may inflict a public censure, or if necessary proceed to the ultimate penalty of excommunication. The excommunication will not be removed until the offender has shown public penitence. In modern times it is probable that a public expression of regret, or in many cases the mere abandonment of a sinful course of life, would be considered to satisfy the demands of public justice. But the principle would be the same as that which insisted on Henry II being publicly scourged or, to come to much more recent times, as that which punished offenders against chastity

by making them stand at the church door in a white sheet. All this may seem somewhat remote from modern practice. But it is not a bad thing to be reminded that there is such a thing as excommunication, and even that it is sometimes exercised. It is not often nowadays that a 'notorious evil liver' desires to receive Holy Communion; but it is possible that our standards of evil life do not always correspond with those of the Divine law, and it might be well if it were recognized that there are other kinds of 'evil life' besides sexual irregularity, and that a slanderous tongue, flagrant neglect of religious duty, or oppression of the poor ought equally to expose a man to individual reproof, and ultimately to excommunication.

Censure and excommunication are the only public ecclesiastical penalties to which the laity are liable. For clerics there are intermediate stages, deprivation of benefices, suspension *a sacris*, degradation from Holy Orders. But it should be pointed out that Church discipline applies to the laity every bit as much as to the clergy, even though the civil courts have ruled that the laity are not subject to the canon law.

But besides the *forum externum* which is the public tribunal of the bishop, the discipline of the Church is also administered in the *forum internum* not only by himself but also by those priests to whom he has committed jurisdiction. This *forum internum* is the con-

fessional. It is characteristic of Christianity that it deals with the intention of the heart more than with the outward act, and Christian penitence is concerned far more with reconciliation than with punishment. It is only a small minority of sins which call for public vindication of the holiness of the Church, yet every sin is an offence against the Church as well as against God. That is the rationale of private self-accusation before a spiritual judge, and the vast scale on which this has been found to be necessary, or at least desirable, makes it impossible for the bishop to deal with the whole of it himself. He therefore deputes others to share with him the 'cure of souls.' They must, of course, be priests, for absolution is an act of forgiveness 'in the person of Christ,' and it is only to the Apostles and those who share the Apostolic ministry that the responsibility for binding and loosing has been committed.

But it must not be thought that any priest, as such, has a right to absolve any penitent. The ultimate responsibility for all discipline is in the hands of the rulers of the Church, and no priest has cure of souls until it has been solemnly committed to him by the bishop. Such priests are said to have 'ordinary jurisdiction,' and in virtue of this jurisdiction have full authority to hear the confessions of their flocks. Or the bishop can delegate jurisdiction for this purpose to other priests, without actually giving them cure of souls. This delegated jurisdiction can be

withdrawn at will. In the English Church it is also generally assumed that a priest who is allowed even tacitly by the bishop to exercise any function in his diocese, which naturally implies the hearing of confessions, such as the holding of an assistant curacy or the conducting of missions and retreats, does *ipso facto* receive delegated jurisdiction.[1]

[1] On the whole subject see E. G. Wood, *The Regal Power of the Church*.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH (*continued*)

II. Catholic [1]

THE Church is also 'Catholic.' And here again we must guard against limiting the meaning of the word to something which would make the statement a mere platitude. It is, of course, quite true that the Church is 'intended for all people.' And it is also true that this by itself differentiates the Church as reconstituted by Christ from the older Jewish Church. The Jewish Church was national, the Christian Church is catholic. That is so true as to be obvious. But historically the word 'Catholic' has a far more intense meaning than that. Even on the first occasion when it is applied to the Church, in the letters of S. Ignatius, the martyr-Bishop of Antioch, it seems to suggest not merely that Christianity is a universal religion but that this character of universality affects and influences every part of it.[2] Catholicism is the opposite of congregationalism. This seems to be the point of S. Ignatius's extraordinary

[1] For this section the writer is much indebted to Canon T. A. Lacey's *Catholicity* and *The Anglo-Catholic Faith*.

[2] *Ad Smyrn.* viii.

emphasis on the necessity of episcopacy. The bishop is the link between the congregation, or rather group of congregations, and the world-wide Church, and thus with Jesus Christ Himself. Therefore, S. Ignatius seems to mean, you must cleave to the bishop. The group of Christians surrounding the bishop of any particular diocese is the Catholic Church in that place.

It is a conception which makes an enormous difference to our whole view of authority. On the one hand, it means that the Church in any particular place normally and prima facie speaks with authority of the whole body because it is the local expression of the universal whole. But on the other hand, because it is only the local expression of the universal whole, it cannot in the last resort settle either doctrine or discipline for itself. If it contradicts the universal whole it is out of court at once.

Thus from the conception of Catholicism, and closely connected with it, there comes into being the idea of an orthodoxy, i.e. of some universal standard by which all doctrinal statements may be tested. This standard is defined by S. Vincent of Lerins in the famous words *quod ubique*, *quod semper*, *quod ab omnibus*. But S. Vincent himself would certainly not wish to have his words too closely pressed, as though Catholicism arrived in the world fully developed on the Day of Pentecost. No more explicit recognition of the fact of doctrinal development could be looked for anywhere than in his writ-

ings. Only he claimed that even if something is taught or practised all over the Church at any particular date that does not of itself make it 'Catholic,' unless it can be shown that it really is developed from the primeval faith and practice of the Church, and not simply grafted into it.

The appeal of the English Reformation was to Holy Scripture as interpreted by the primitive Church. This was really the reassertion of S. Vincent's canon. For if Catholicism is to mean universal in time as well as in extension; if, that is to say, *quod ubique* and *quod ab omnibus* are not enough and we are always to demand evidence of *semper*, then Scripture is the only appeal. We have no other real evidence as to the belief of the Apostolic Church except that of Scripture, and to recognize Scripture as the record of the original form of our traditions, undeveloped but also uncorrupted, is to take a common-sense precaution against the real danger of a false development. Thus if a traditional doctrine seems to have no roots at all in Scripture, that is a sufficient reason for suspecting it, and even for saying that it cannot in the last resort be part of the very essence of Christianity.

But that is a very different thing from claiming that no doctrine can be called Catholic unless it is to be found expressly stated in Scripture. On the face of it it would be very strange if the whole faith of the Church happened to be set out at length in a collection of

documents so casually collected as those of the New Testament. No doubt the existence of the New Testament is providential, and also there is enough of it to make it probable that nothing vital to Christian faith and life is omitted. But there is no reason whatever to think that it was part of the Apostles' plan for the teaching of the Faith,[1] and therefore no reason to believe that the emphasis which happens to be laid on any point in the New Testament is any criterion of its importance in the general scheme of the Christian religion.

But we should be quite untrue to the actual usage of words if we pretended that the meaning of Catholicism was simply, 'That which has universally been believed and practised among Christians.' When we are dealing with the conception of universality any exception really disproves the rule, and therefore the number of 'Catholic' things would be progressively diminishing with the number of things that could be denied or abandoned. Moreover, when we use the word, we all have an idea in our minds which is far more concrete than that of mere universality; and it would be pedantry to refuse to accept this as part of the legitimate meaning of the word. The conviction that the Church is one and therefore universal, and that this one Church is the Body of Christ and the organ of the Holy Ghost, is bound to colour

[1] The Canon of the New Testament was not settled until A.D. 397 in the West, and A.D. 692 in the East.

all our spiritual outlook. There is a Catholic spirit. It stands for the historical (*semper*), the international (*ubique*), the authority of the whole body (*ab omnibus*). It emphasizes the necessity of orthodoxy, of unity, of authority. It is opposed to provincialism, to peculiarity, to self-will. Thus it comes about that even within the Church there can be a 'Catholic Movement,' in the sense of a movement towards a deeper appreciation of what it means to be members of a Church which is Catholic. There is a group which is called (and is even compelled by circumstances to call itself) Anglo-Catholic, because its ideal is to emphasize this Catholic tone and spirit within the Anglican portion of the universal Church.

Thus in regard to doctrine there is a Catholic attitude : namely that in the last resort it is an organic body of truth, given to us, not merely chosen by us. To be a 'good Catholic' needs some intellectual humility. But this does not mean that the Catholic spirit is one of blind acceptance or of mental stagnation. If Catholicism is now such a different thing from the Catholicism of the primitive Church, that is because men of alert yet humble minds have allowed it to germinate and grow. By now its main outlines are clear and distinct. If in some respects it seems to be still in a state of flux, it is only reasonable to believe that the last word has not yet been said. Men who seem to have the Catholic mind are unable to come to an

agreement. Let them continue the salutary work of mutual criticism, and we may hope that in the end something still more clear and balanced will have emerged.

So also there is a Catholic attitude towards Church discipline. What do I have to do because I am a member of the Catholic Church, and what will the Church say to me if I do not do it? It must be acknowledged on all hands that appalling mistakes have been made in trying to find the right answer to such questions as these. Few things are less like the mind of Christ than the attitude of the mediaeval Church towards the right methods of ecclesiastical discipline. But for all that it remains true that Catholic discipline must always be founded on the idea that obedience is due from all to the living Church as the representative of our Lord.

In primitive times all lived in the immediate consciousness of an authority which was swift to take vengeance on conduct unworthy of the Christian name. That is one end of the scale. It is very unwise to idealize it. It is open to criticism not only for its exaggerated belief in the necessity for shameful punishment, but still more for its constant refusal of forgiveness even when sorrow for sin was sincere and undoubted.[1]

At the other end there is our modern way of leaving the laity with hardly any real dis-

[1] See chap. ix.

cipline at all. The change is certainly remarkable, yet even if it has gone near to being a degeneration, it is all of a piece with the Catholic ideal. Whatever happens, the Church must not be allowed to become a coterie. Rather than that let the formal obligations of membership be made as slight as possible. There must no doubt be something that we must do to mark our membership in the Catholic community, but apart from that there is very little in the way of Church obligation which modern Catholicism demands.

The lightness of the yoke of the Church proceeds from the very universality of her claims. The claims which can be made on all must be slight from the very variability of human nature. The problem is how to get men to keep the universal law of God, and the task of the Church is to help us to do that. Very wisely she refuses to multiply merely ecclesiastical obligations for the rank and file. Even the obligations which she does seem to insist on go very little beyond a statement as to what she will recognize as the absolute minimum which is required by the Divine law. The Divine law compels us to frequent the Eucharist, to seek reconciliation if we have fallen away from God, to fast, to see that the labourer has his hire. The 'precepts of the Church'[1] merely lay down the minimum

[1] The precepts of the Church are commonly stated as follows: (1) To hear Mass on Sundays and days of obligation. (For the word 'Mass' see p. 155 n.) (2) To communicate at

which the Church will recognize as a fulfilment of these duties. How far beyond this minimum the individual's duty demands that he should go is a question for his conscience. At this point the Church will offer guidance but will not seek to exercise even a moral compulsion.

III. ONE

We have thought of the Church as Apostolic and as Catholic. The 'Nicene' Creed speaks of her also as 'One.' We are inclined to say that perhaps in those days it was true; at the present time it is nothing but a stinging paradox.

The most important thing to realize is that the unity of the Church, like her holiness, is a mystical truth. That is to say, it is something spiritual to be detected under an outward form which may seem to embody it very imperfectly. In this it is like the other truths of our religion; it is like the Incarnation itself, and like the

Easter. (The local rule of the Church of England is 'three times in the year, of which Easter shall be one.') (3) To keep certain days as days of fasting or abstinence. (4) To go to confession once a year. (On the question whether this is binding on Anglicans see chap. ix.) (5) To contribute to the support of the clergy. (6) Not to contract matrimony during Advent or Lent. (The Anglican canon law is stricter, and the forbidden seasons extend from Advent to the Octave of the Epiphany, from Septuagesima to Low Sunday, and from Ascension Day to the Octave of Pentecost. The observance of this stricter law seems to be very desirable; but it would be very difficult to enforce it, and to attempt to do so would probably do more harm than good.)

Sacraments. In both these the outward form is inadequate to express the whole of the inner reality. But in regard to the unity of the Church it is more than inadequacy that we have to face; it is very like contradiction. Our divisions are a byword. Something must be said to explain and apologize for them. For if the outward form really does contradict what is supposed to be the inner reality we have an absurdity. The unity of the Church to the intuition of faith expresses the essential unity of Christ Himself. Well, yes : if there is any unity in the Church ! It is necessary, then, to try to discover where the unity of the Church really does lie, if we are to behold in her the lineaments of Christ.

Of course it is tempting to look for the expression of unity in the Papacy, and indeed a constitutional papacy would probably express, establish, and maintain unity better than any other institution that could be imagined. The sense that there is some one who represents to the eye of faith the single and indivisible will of Christ is unspeakably impressive. Only it does not appear, so far as we can see, that it was the intention of our Lord to set up over His Church an unchecked absolute monarchy. He is our absolute monarch. But it does not follow that He has set up a single human being to be His vicar in that respect. It is one thing to say that we are to see the unity of Christ in that of the Church; it is quite another to say that therefore

the Church must have a head whose word is literally law. As a fact, it is not clear that the absolute Papacy has guarded the unity of the Church, unless we beg the whole question by saying that the Pope is the sole judge of membership in the Church. Prima facie it seems as though the overpressing of the papal claims was the very thing which was responsible for the rending of the Church in sunder.

The original idea of the unity of the Church was undoubtedly bound up with the episcopal order. When disputes arose, the first thing to do was to get the bishops into consultation with each other, and so attempt to arrive at agreement. As soon as the cessation of persecution gave peace to the Church, episcopal consultation became possible on a much larger scale. Councils of bishops were held from time to time, and occasionally, when matters of great importance had to be considered, an attempt was made to make these Councils really representative of the whole Church, in the conviction that if it were only possible to arrive at the mind of the whole Church that would assuredly correspond with the mind of the Holy Ghost. But the decision of such a Council was never treated as infallible in itself. Its importance was that it brought matters to a head and provided at least a provisional decision of the subject in dispute. It remained to be seen whether the Church as a whole did in the end support it when it was put forth in clear and definite form. If so, the

Council took rank as 'ecumenical' and its doctrinal decrees were accepted as final.

The first and most famous of such Councils was that summoned at Nicaea in A.D. 325 to deal with the opinion of Arius, who denied the eternal Godhead of our Lord. The result of this Council was the general acceptance of the Nicene Creed (in its original form, somewhat shorter than that now in use). From that time onwards the teaching of the Church has been that our Lord is 'of one substance with the Father.'[1] There was a great revival of Arianism during the second half of the fourth century,

[1] The Arian doctrine was by no means Unitarian. Arius taught that God the Son came into being at a later date than God the Father and was entirely separate from Him. Arianism in fact was 'Binitarian' to the point of really believing in two Gods, only one of whom was eternal. When the issue was defined as clearly as this there could ultimately be only one answer as to whether or no it was compatible with Christianity.

But in choosing the word *homo-ousion* as the weapon by which Arianism was to be destroyed the Nicene fathers effectually cut at the root of that tendency to think of Christ as a second God, which was the constant danger of primitive Alexandrian theology (see Mr. Green's essay in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*). To say that Christ is of one substance, or essence, with the Father does not mean that each shares in the quality of Godhead, but that each is identically God. The word had been condemned in the previous century as savouring of Sabellianism, which reduced the distinction between the Divine Persons to that which exists between three different aspects or characters successively assumed. This danger is guarded against in the Nicene Creed by the words 'God of God.'

but all through the darkest times theologians were able to point to the fact that the *homo-ousion* had been accepted once for all, and to show that the Church would be stultifying and contradicting herself by going back on that. And in fact the Arian revival proved to be only temporary. It can hardly be disputed that the free and final decision of the Church was an utter condemnation of the Arian theory that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was a junior and inferior God. The theory had a fair trial, even a period of ascendancy, and was rejected as being incompatible with the original faith of the Church.

During the next few centuries the conciliar method was put in practice again and again. It was by no means always possible to attain unanimity, but the general view of the Church was usually clear. In this way decisions were arrived at not only on the perfection of our Lord's Godhead but also on the perfection of His Humanity, on the unity of His Person, on the real distinction between His Godhead and His Humanity, and finally on the more subtle but no less necessary truth that He has a real human will which must be distinguished from that omnipotent creative will of which in virtue of His Godhead He must ever stand possessed.

These were the decisions of the six great Councils which are indubitably 'ecumenical,' that is to say of world-wide authority. Unfor-

tunately the actual acceptance of some of them was by no means actually world-wide. The Councils of Ephesus (A.D. 431) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451) led straight to schism on a wide scale in the Churches of the East. But it seems clear that the decisions of the Councils were really accepted by the main body of the Church, and that they do represent in a balanced form the traditional doctrine of the Church, while the teachings of the Nestorians and Monophysites are one-sided and exaggerated. As in the case of Arianism, the actual heresies condemned at Ephesus and Chalcedon seem to have disappeared almost entirely ; but while Arianism has left not a trace behind, Nestorianism and Monophysitism have bequeathed to Christendom a legacy not so much of heresy as of schism. For while it is unfortunately true that there is a Church which is called 'Nestorian' and two which refuse to acknowledge the decrees of Chalcedon, it seems probable that the actual teaching of all three is perfectly orthodox. The ecclesiastical politics of the fifth century were very badly mismanaged, and it is possible that with a little more sympathy and less violence on both sides there need never have been a split at all. It was the unfortunate enlistment of national and political animosities in doctrinal disputes which resulted in the loss to the Catholic Church of many millions, most of whom never intended to be heretical at all.

A seventh Ecumenical Council met at Nicaea in A.D. 787. It is much less important, and its claim to be considered ecumenical has even been disputed. It dealt with the subject of the veneration which the Church pays to images of our Lord and the saints, and was summoned in view of the disastrous policy of some of the Eastern emperors who were destroying all the images (those 'books of the unlearned') on which they could lay their hands.

Meanwhile the See of Rome was becoming more and more in practice the centre of ecclesiastical unity. Everything conspired to augment the powers of the Pope. Already at the Council of Ephesus, and still more markedly at Chalcedon and at the Third Council of Constantinople, Rome had played a decisive part even though the actual Councils were held far from the seat of the papacy. The religious authority of the see founded by the joint action of the two greatest Apostles, one of whom was by our Lord's appointment the leader of the Apostolic body, and the political prestige of the city so long associated with the government of the world combined to point out the Bishop of Rome as the inevitable president of the Christian Church. When once this position was attained it was equally inevitable that it should seem to be a fulfilment of our Lord's mysterious sayings to S. Peter. Then, when the seat of government was transferred to Constantinople, there was no authority left in the West

which could be compared to that of the Pope. Little by little he assumed the character of a priest-king, and when at last the Empire of the West was revived the incident was so staged as to make it appear that the Emperor reigned by papal authority.

But the fact that there was another imperial court at Constantinople meant that the Roman Pope was not going to have it all his own way. To the indignation of the West the Patriarch of the new Imperial City began to call himself by the sounding title of 'Ecumenical Patriarch,' and from this time onwards the relations between Rome and Constantinople are one long story of mutual excommunication and patched up peace. The final breach occurred in 1054, and although a temporary reconciliation took place in the fifteenth century, it was repudiated by the Easterns, and only resulted in still more embittered relations. Apart from the question of the papal supremacy which was really the root of the matter, it was all a miserable ecclesiastical squabble, in which the faults on both sides are only too conspicuous; but it has never been made up, and henceforward we have the distressing spectacle of a divided Church.

Of course it is possible to say with the Roman Catholics that the Easterns, having separated from the centre of unity, have no claim to be considered any longer as part of the Catholic Church; or with the Easterns that the Pope

and his followers, having invented new standards of doctrine, have ceased to be orthodox and are therefore outside the Church. But it is extraordinarily difficult to charge a group of Christians with schism on the mere ground that they have been excommunicated by the Holy See, when it is precisely the extent of the privileges of that see which are under debate. On the other hand it is even more paradoxical to assert that what appears to be the great central body of Catholic Christendom is after all no more than a dead branch. The only statement which seems to fit the facts is that the Catholic Church, though outwardly divided, is still one in the mystical unity of the Body of Christ. If, then, a man wants to know whether he is within the one Church the only question he has to ask is whether he is in communion with a bishop who is in lawful possession of his see, as testified by the fact that the other bishops of his region accept him. No doubt it would be more satisfactory to say 'the bishops of the whole of the rest of the Church,' but under our tragic circumstances of disunion no such unanimity is possible: we can only take the geographical neighbourhood, and assume that if a bishop is received into comity by his neighbours his lawful jurisdiction may be assumed. After all, this is the authentic and original way of guaranteeing the canonical position of a bishop. He must be elected first, ideally by the flock to whom he is to minister

and by the clergy over whom he is to be chief, but before he can be consecrated his election must be confirmed, that is to say it must be approved by the neighbouring bishops, or at a later date by the archbishop as their representative. It is open to any one to think if he chooses that a papal confirmation would be the better way, 'but from the beginning it was not so.'

We are not to think, then, that the excommunication of Michael Cerularius[1] by the Pope cut off all who held to him from the communion of the Church. The Pope was in no sense acting as the mouthpiece of the universal Church when he took this fatal step. He was acting as the mouthpiece of Western Christendom and taking a side against the traditions of the East. It is intolerable to hold that partisan action of this kind can really be the voice of the Holy Ghost. To say this is not to criticize the action of the Pope in this particular quarrel, but merely to deny that excommunication by the Pope is equivalent to expulsion from the Church. When there is a united episcopate behind the Pope he may be the natural mouthpiece of the Church, but when he appears to be acting merely as a party-leader there is no such security.

So in 1054 the dreadful thing happened, and the outward unity of the Church was destroyed. Henceforward it is impossible for the Church

[1] Patriarch of Constantinople at the time of the final schism between East and West, 1054.

to speak with one voice in any new matters which are brought forward for decision. But after all the main outlines of the Faith had long been defined. The very fact that the last Council which seems able to claim rightfully the title of 'ecumenical' occupied itself with such a secondary matter as the right attitude of the Church towards images seems to show that the true line between orthodoxy and heresy had already been drawn with sufficient clearness, and there may even have been a providential element in the fact that the Church was, so to say, struck dumb in the eleventh century.[1]

Similar events on a smaller scale have since taken place. By far the most important was one which was connected with the great movement of thought which is called the Reformation. In regard to that movement there is perhaps only one fact which is common ground to all the contending parties of that confused and perplexing period. That fact is that the Church was in grievous need of reform. Most of the reforming groups were driven into a position of such antagonism that they were almost compelled to separate themselves from the traditional Church order altogether, a position which was both symbolized and made actual

[1] To compare small things with great, we might draw a parallel with the suppression of Convocation in England in the eighteenth century. Nothing could apparently be more unjustifiable, yet the outrage may have saved the Church of England from action which she would afterwards have had bitter reason to regret.

by the provision of new ministries, unconnected with the historic episcopate.

In our own country a less extreme course was taken, and a real attempt was made to effect a reform without breaking with the traditional and essential order of the Church. There can be no doubt that the intention of the Anglican reformers was to preserve the episcopate and all the essentials of the Catholic Faith. For the former we have to look no further than the Preface to the Anglican Ordinal, and for the latter to the official statement that their will was 'not to separate from the unity of Christ's Catholic Church.' The case is almost exactly parallel with the separation between Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy five centuries earlier in history. There is abundance of fault which can be found with both parties, but in the end it seems impossible to say that on the one side we have the Catholic Church and on the other a schism. In both cases the actual and final excommunication was the act of the Pope, and in both cases we can only decide on the effect of that excommunication when we have made up our minds whether it is true that to be in communion with Rome is the final test of being within the Catholic Church. Apart from that there seems nothing in the Anglican Reformation which amounts to any evidence of an intention to set up a new religious body. The greatest care was taken to ensure valid episcopal consecration of the new bishops, and in par-

ticular of Parker the Archbishop of Canterbury. If it is difficult to justify the deprivation of some of the Marian bishops on the accession of Elizabeth it must be remembered that Mary had taken an even more high-handed action in regard to those bishops whom she found unwilling to take an oath of allegiance to the Pope; and indeed, on any showing, out of the whole number of Elizabethan bishops not more than six can be said to have been in uncanonical possession of their sees.[1]

The Reformation in England was never intended to be the foundation of a new Church. All that was intended was, on the one hand, to dispute the claim of the Pope to be absolute ruler of the Church, a position which, it must be acknowledged, he had grossly abused; and on the other to come to terms with the new learning and its effects on theological thought,

[1] At Elizabeth's accession the primacy was vacant, and Parker was canonically elected to succeed. All the Marian bishops but one refused to take the Oath of Supremacy and were deprived of their sees. But it must be remembered (1) that several of them ought never to have been in possession of their sees at all, the lawful occupants being still alive; (2) that others would have been in the same case but for the fact that Mary had uncanonically deprived their predecessors and burnt them to death; (3) that the bishops were under a canonical obligation to take the Oath of Supremacy which had been accepted by Convocation, and contained, as we are at liberty to maintain, nothing contrary to Catholic order; (4) eleven of the Marian bishops did, as a matter of fact, die a natural death before their successors were put into their places.

without forsaking the traditional faith and discipline of the Church. If in our calmer times we are sometimes shocked at the violence of language and action which was employed, we have to remember that England was fighting for her life, and that she was surrounded with enemies who had no scruple in turning theological quarrels into an excuse for war, invasion, and assassination.

Nothing is more characteristic of religious thought at the present time than a deep shame over this matter of Christian disunion, and on all sides efforts are being made towards a better understanding. The different groups, both within and without the body of the Catholic Church, are having more influence over each other than they have ever had before, and it is probably true that we are moving rather rapidly, if not to a complete reunion, yet in the direction of a regrouping of Christendom. Such a regrouping, we may hope, will ultimately bring together again those, in whatever body they may be, who have seen and appreciated the vision of one authoritative Catholic Church, the living Body of Christ upon earth and His own appointed means for bringing all nations into a supernatural fellowship with God and with each other.

IV. HOLY

But lastly, and most distinctively, the Church is holy. No more exalted language could be

used of any institution than that which S. Paul and S. John the Divine employ about the Church. She is the Body of Christ, His Bride, the pillar and ground of the truth. His fullness indwells her. She is clothed with the sun, and the moon is under her feet. The words are none too strong to express the love and devotion which the Catholic mind feels towards her. She is indeed the home of the Holy Spirit, and His infallible mouthpiece ; it is through her that Christ must be effectively acknowledged through the world. He must be recognized in her, must act through her, must win men's hearts and bind their consciences by her means.

And yet! It is said that Church history is the best cordial for drooping spirits : but indeed we do not always find it so. True we can always encourage each other with an *O passi graviora*, and we can repeat for ourselves the experience of the doubter who was convinced of the divine mission of the Church by the very fact that she was enabled to survive her obvious failings. For, as a matter of fact, every possible thing seems to have gone wrong with the Church since her foundation. Every form of wickedness and of folly has at one time or another affected her. The imposing list of *gesta Christi* which stand to her credit can be balanced with a damning catalogue of Satanic wickedness and of imbecile inefficiency. If the Church is indeed the Body of our Lord, then all through

the ages He has been suffering a mystical crucifixion.

Yet for all that, because of what the Church is, we can and must revere her. As S. Joseph and Nicodemus blindly and miserably tended the crucified Body of Christ so we must do honour to the Church however little she seems to be what she claims. And, if it is not fanciful to press the analogy further, just as the dead Body of Christ showed those strange signs of life when its side was pierced, so if we are on the watch we shall always see some tokens of the real spiritual life of the Church even when she seems most dead. The Church never fails us altogether. Again and again it has seemed as though she could not possibly survive another generation, and then always there has appeared some new movement of the Spirit, and the dead bones have lived once more. The 'Catholic Movement,' now so conspicuous in the English Church, is but one of these stirrings, but it is by no means the least.

CHAPTER VII

THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

FEW things have obscured the true nature of Christianity more than a misunderstanding of S. Paul's famous distinction between the spirit and the letter. This contrast has found its way into common speech in a sense entirely different from that which it bore in the mind of its author. When we speak about 'the spirit' of anything we mean something abstract, its inner meaning, its tone, its principle. S. Paul never speaks of the spirit of any *thing*. 'Spirit' is to him a personal word. It means either the Holy Ghost, or the human spirit, or, occasionally, the human spirit as indwelt by the Holy Ghost. So far from being abstract it is the most concrete conception imaginable. It refers to the supreme concrete fact of Christianity, the fact of the indwelling of God in human personalities. It is not the opposite of 'body,' but its complement. If it is true, as S. James says, that 'the body apart from the spirit is dead,'[1] it is also true that the

[1] S. Jas. ii. 26.

spirit without the body is incomplete and unexpressed.[1]

Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation, that is to say of spirit expressing itself through body. This idea is the master-key which unlocks all the doors in the house of faith. By the Incarnation God takes into Himself real flesh and blood. His saving works are actually wrought out with bodily toil and sweat : His Atonement is accomplished by external bodily acts and sufferings: His Resurrection is a bodily Resurrection : the powers of the Risen Body are bodily powers. A spiritual body is not a contradiction in terms ; it does not mean a body which is really not body at all but spirit : it means a body which is the perfect expression and instrument of spirit. So the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost must not be attenuated to mean that a certain influence from Christ became active among His followers. Rather it means that God Himself took possession of a certain group of people, already organized into a definite society, and that within the limits of that society He henceforth has a special dwelling.

[1] By 'letter,' S. Paul does not mean 'literal meaning,' 'but code of law.' The ideal which he is combating is that of the man who sets out to do what he is told for no other reason than that he has been told to do it. This may be well enough in some departments of life, even of religious life, as indeed it is very conspicuous in 'religion' in the technical sense. But as an ultimate ideal it is sub-Christian. The Christian standard is, 'I will write My law in their hearts.'

Christians are essentially a body. Nothing could be more contradictory of the idea of Christianity than a false spirituality. The notion that spirit should keep aloof from body, and that religion is concerned with spiritual things to the exclusion of what is material, contradicts all that the Incarnation stands for, and all the practice of the Church at her best and most spiritual periods. *Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.* The much applauded saying of the Roman dramatist might serve as a motto for Christ Himself and for His Church. It is quite true that there is a division of labour in the Church. Just as at the earliest period of her history the Apostles soon found by harsh experience that twelve pairs of hands could not do everything, so throughout Church history there have always been the active and the contemplative, the men of affairs and the men of prayer, the men of action and the men of thought, the busy matrons and the celestial brides. But always when the Church has been true to her Master she has recognized that exterior and interior alike belong to Him, and that it is her business, as His Church, to claim the whole of life for Him and consecrate it to Him.

It is in this context of thought that we can best understand the Sacraments. As long as we are trying to be superior and ultra-spiritual they will never seem anything but strange excrescences on Christianity, to be accepted on

authority perhaps, but never to be related to the rest of our theory of spiritual reality. Once grasp the fact that Christ is the Word made Flesh, and the sacramental life of the Church fits into its place naturally and without effort. While it remains true that spirit is primary and body only secondary (to reverse the order would be materialism) ; and while individual prayer is very largely a matter of pure spirituality, the Holy Spirit elevating the human spirit Godward : yet the corporate acts of the Church have invariably their outward expression. Human spirits can only act upon each other by bodily means, and therefore, if our Lord really intends to use the Church as His instrument in this world, there must be always the outward and material attestation of His presence.

The Catholic Church now speaks of seven Sacraments. The number is not in itself very important, and it will always be a question of definition. The numbering is not ancient. It dates from Peter Lombard in the twelfth century, and it is therefore difficult to assert that there must be some special character about just these seven external acts of God through the Church to differentiate them from all others. At the same time these seven outward actions or things do seem to stand by themselves as pledged and certain means of securing grace, and it might well be thought both insular and pedantic to insist on narrowing the meaning of the word so that it should only cover two

of the seven mysteries accepted as ' sacraments ' by the rest of the Catholic Church. It is not quite clear whether or no the Church of England desired to make this limitation. Both the Catechism and the Articles are ambiguous, perhaps designedly so. In any case there is no authority earlier than the sixteenth century for stating dogmatically that there are two Sacraments and two only.

The Sacraments are the means by which the Church openly, visibly and audibly, claims to act to her members as the instrument of Christ. Two of them have to do with initiation into the Church. These are Baptism and its sequel Confirmation. The former consists of washing with water in the Name of the Holy Trinity. It is normally administered by a priest, but in case of necessity any one may baptize. Its effect is to admit to the Church as the Spirit-bearing Body, and so to membership in Christ and to the forgiveness of sins. (It is assumed, of course, in the case of an adult that it is received with right dispositions. No Sacrament can do anything but harm unless it is received with faith and penitence.) Confirmation has from the beginning been administered as the completion of Baptism ; the effect of it is to confer a further endowment of the Holy Spirit, and it has often been thought that its object is to consecrate the recipient to a life of service.[1]

[1] Some theologians believe that the gift of the indwelling Spirit is conferred for the first time in Confirmation, and that

The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop, inasmuch as in the two instances where it is described in the Acts it was conferred by the Apostles in person.[1] In both these cases the symbolic action is that of the laying on of hands.[2]

A third Sacrament which is closely connected with these two is that of Penance, the object of which is to restore the penitent soul to the position which it has forfeited by mortal sin.[3]

The great central Sacrament of the Christian life is the Holy Eucharist, which differs from the rest in being not merely an action but an object. This distinction is based on the fact that our Lord first consecrated the sacred ele-

the effect of Baptism by itself is to cleanse the soul in preparation for that gift. See essay on 'The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism' in *Confirmation or the Laying on of Hands*, vol. i.

[1] Acts viii. 15–17; xix. 6.

[2] It is only the Anglican Communion which has retained what appears to be the original outward sign in Confirmation. In the Roman Catholic Church it is represented by the spreading out of the bishop's hand over all the candidates in general, but in the Eastern Orthodox Church it has disappeared altogether; and both Roman Catholics and Orthodox regard anointing, rather than imposition of hands, as the 'matter' of the Sacrament. It is a pity that the Anglican Churches have failed to retain this primitive ceremony of anointing, but if either was to be dropped it certainly seems better to have retained what is indubitably Apostolic.

[3] See chap. ix, and *Essays Catholic and Critical*, pp. 439–445.

ments to be His Body and Blood, and then commanded His disciples to eat and drink. Therefore it seems that the Church is right in insisting that the Bread and Wine do not become sacramental by being eaten, but are already converted into a Sacrament by consecration.[1]

Then there are two Sacraments which consecrate the recipients to a special state of life : Holy Order [2] and Matrimony.

Finally, there is the Sacrament of the sick, Unction, often spoken of as Extreme Unction because it normally comes after the anointing which in other parts of the Church is given at Confirmation and in the conferring of Holy Order. In early times it seems to have been given almost entirely with the idea of healing bodily sickness ; in the Middle Ages it was thought of as a preparation for death. The latter view is certainly mistaken—at any rate if held to the exclusion of the former—but it does not follow that we should be right in thinking of it as having no object but that of physical healing. It was a natural and true development which made men see that a religious rite must concern itself with the state of a man's soul, and even where the object of bodily healing is not attained it would be a vast mistake to think that the anointing had failed of its effect. Until recent years this Sacrament had entirely dropped out of use in the English Church, but there has been a great revival of the use of it, and much evidence is

[1] See chap. viii. [3] See chap. v, pp. 89 ff.

available of its efficacy for the restoration of both spiritual and bodily powers.[1]

It is often urged that all this sacramental religion is really of a magical character, and that to lay emphasis on it is to degrade Christianity. We have already dealt with this argument in so far as it is based on the false idea that Christianity is not concerned with the material side of life. But the sting of the accusation of 'magic' is not exactly here. It is suggested that sacramentalism is a matter of spells and formulae. Just as a wizard in old days would be in possession of certain secrets; for instance, that certain words written with the blood of a certain animal on parchment of a particular kind would act as a charm to give protection in any danger; so, the suggestion is, the priesthood of the Church claims that a certain form of words uttered by the right person over the right sort of material will have magical power.

[1] Father Puller, S.S.J.E., in *The Anointing of the Sick*, seems to prove that the patristic evidence all favours the former view. But his contention that S. James's statement about forgiveness of sins refers to the Sacrament of Penance seems disputable. It would imply that priests had authority to give Absolution in the first century, and also seems to involve the translation of a future indicative as though it were an imperative. It is certainly a more natural interpretation of the passage in S. James to connect forgiveness with the Unction. Is it possible that he means that if the man's sickness is a punishment for sin, his healing will be the reward of his penitence and the pledge of his forgiveness?

Alter the words, or the material, or the speaker, and the charm will refuse to act.

Now it may be admitted that there is a certain danger that superstitious minds may look at sacramental rites from a magical point of view, as though their potency depended on some intrinsic quality of formula or material or priest. The truth of course is—and it is well to be reminded of it—that it depends entirely on the revealed will of our Lord. The original formula of the Sacraments was in most cases couched in the form of a prayer. In modern practice the form is usually changed to something which seems to speak with more certainty of the result being obtained (as, for example, 'I absolve thee from all thy sins'). That, however, is only to make it clear that where the right conditions are present (and it must be emphasized that the principal right condition is the frame of mind of the recipient), the result is no longer in doubt, seeing that it rests upon a promise of our Lord Himself.

As for the meticulous accuracy with which the Church lays down the exact words which are to be used, its object is only to remove any possible doubt as to the intention with which the sacred act is done. The words used must be such as to express that intention without ambiguity. If they do that, the Sacrament is valid, that is, 'sure.' It is not a question of using some exact formula, so that the alteration of a word would spoil the whole thing; but of

using some words which shall make it plain that the minister of the Sacrament is appealing to God to ratify His own covenant.

Thus it makes no difference to the validity of an Absolution whether the minister uses the precatory or the declaratory form, provided only that it is clear that the intentions of the priest and penitent are clearly expressed. But in practice the priest is bidden to use the declaratory form in order that there may be no doubt that he is actually exercising the discipline of the Church on a case which has been submitted to him, and not merely expressing a pious trust in the divine mercies. Only it needs to be said again and again that the opposite of 'valid' is not 'null,' but 'insecure.'

The essence of a sacramental formula is always prayer, implied or expressed; the essence of a magical formula is that it is a word of power, stronger even than the will of the god in whose name it is uttered. A Sacrament employs significant symbolism; magic is largely arbitrary. The sacramental system implies that there is a rational coherence between the two created worlds of spirit and matter; magic suggests that they have become accidentally entangled in each other at certain points. The Sacraments derive from the one God; magical practices depend on rival and freakish minor spirits.

In Catholic Christianity, then, we have a unique recognition of the obstinate fact of the

body. This is the rock on which the lesser faiths always seem to make shipwreck. There is a Scylla and there is a Charybdis. The one treats the bodily life as a thing which has no concern with religion. That is the two-compartment theory of life, and leads to neglect of social duty, to personal luxuriousness, in extreme instances to definite immorality. The other treats the body as a thing to be suppressed, and exposes itself to strange revenges. Christianity, when it is true to its own genius, keeps to that middle way chosen by our Incarnate Lord. Man is not 'a spirit dragging about a carcase.' The body is neither an incubus nor a parasite, but a temporary instrument for attaining perfection. When the instrument has done its work it wears out ; but it leaves us the richer for the use we have made of our five senses and our powers of self-expression ; and not the least part of the treasure we take with us from this world will be our acquired ability to master our senses and to express not the false self but the true. The Christian hope is not mere survival, but resurrection ; and whatever exactly that may mean, and however necessary it may be to purge our ideas of it from childishness, crudity, and materialism, it remains true that the faith of the Church looks for the redemption of the body as well as the salvation of the soul.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

WE have tried to see something of the significance of what our Lord did and said at His Supper in the Upper Room. There seems to be reason to believe that His action on that supreme occasion may have been in itself a vital part of the eternal Sacrifice.[1] In any case it was the necessary expression of the meaning and purpose of that sacrifice : so necessary that we could hardly have guessed them otherwise.

But Christians have always believed that it was also the first of a whole series of sacrificial actions, all alike representative of the eternal and abiding value of the one Sacrifice of the Cross ; and that our Lord not only then and there expressed by words and acts the significance of His coming Passion, but also left an instruction to His Church to repeat those words and acts perpetually in the new dispensation which He was even now leading them to expect.

Attempts have lately been made to discredit the tradition that He instituted the Holy Eucharist as a permanent rite. It has been pointed out

[1] See pp. 57 f.

quite truly that there are certain critical difficulties about the text of S. Luke,[1] and that this throws us back on a letter written by S. Paul, who was not an eyewitness, as our only unquestionable documentary authority for the alleged fact.[2] The question is further complicated by the assertion that S. Paul, knowing that some of his converts had been votaries of Oriental mystery religions before their conversion to Christianity, smoothed the path for them by encouraging them to believe (what was in fact untrue) that the Christian Church also had its 'mysteries,' to partake in which was to have a passport to a blessed immortality.

The problem is very ably dealt with by Dr. N. P. Williams in *Essays Catholic and Critical*,[3] to which the reader is referred for a full treatment of this vital matter. Dr. Williams seems to succeed in showing how impossible it would have been for S. Paul, the new Apostle, with so much jealousy to contend against, and so many enemies even among those who should have been his friends, to have foisted on the Church, as the centre of its weekly worship, a half-pagan 'mystery' which changed, and indeed debased, the whole idea of Christianity. Moreover, the theory supposes that in alleging that he had received all this 'from the Lord,' he was either relying on some supposed vision, or else, still more incredibly, making an auda-

[1] See S. Luke xxii. 14–20, with R.V. marginal notes.
[2] 1 Cor. xi. 23–25. [3] pp. 369–423.

cious appeal to a tradition which he falsely claimed to have received from the older Apostles, although they were alive and able to contradict him. Dr. Williams also finds in the words, given by S. Mark, and copied with a trifling alteration by S. Matthew, 'I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God,'[1] a clear indication that our Lord did intend that the rite should be continued after the advent of the new reign of God in the dispensation of the Christian Church.

It must be remembered that the whole weight of the Christian tradition asserts unhesitatingly that this solemn action, repeated at least once a week wherever Christianity was to be found, owes its origin to a command of Christ Himself. We have a fair amount of information about the customs of the Church in various parts of the world within the first century and a half of the Christian era, and nowhere is there the faintest trace of the Eucharist having to establish itself as a new custom. It is beyond belief that this is to be assigned to the uncorroborated testimony of one Christian teacher who, it was well known, was not one of the original disciples.

Assuming, then, that S. Paul's narrative as substantially corroborated by our earliest Gospel, S. Mark, is true, and that he is a trustworthy guide as to the traditional teaching of the Church, we must go on to ask what is the

[1] S. Mark xiv. 25; cf. S. Matt. xxvi. 29.

abiding significance of this central rite of Christian worship.

The Gospels tell us that our Lord 'gave thanks,' and that He 'blessed,' and it seems reasonable to interpret the equivocal word 'blessed' by the phrase of certain meaning. In other words the primary meaning of 'He blessed' is that He blessed God, not that He blessed the bread and wine. But to Jewish ears and, we may venture to say, on Jewish lips, a blessing, though addressed to God, sanctifies the objects for which He is so blessed. Grace before meat was to the Jew a thing of far greater significance than we find it easy to understand. The food over which thanks had been given was holy. The blessing not only released the food for human use, but also gave it a sacred character. It partook of the nature of a thankoffering.[1]

But this thanksgiving on the part of the Incarnate Word Himself at the very crisis of His earthly life was far more than any ordinary grace before meat. For it was Himself in His sacrificed humanity that He beheld in the bread and wine. We do not know the actual words in which He made His thanksgiving, but it is clear that in making it He was sanctifying the bread and wine not only that they might be holy Food, but that they might be somehow identified with His Body and Blood. That which was being made into a thank-offering was

[1] See Gavin, *The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments*, chap. iii.

not merely the visible elements which lay on the Table but His own Humanity, even now being delivered over to obedient suffering, and so in a new sense given to God. He looks on the Bread and Wine, and sees in them Himself ; He looks on Himself and sees the Food of the souls of men ; and finally He delivers to the Apostles the holy Gifts with words declaratory of a mystical identity between the Gifts and the Giver. 'Take ye : this is My Body.' 'This is My Blood of the covenant, which is shed for many.'[1]

Now prima facie we should suppose that all this was the language of pure symbolism : that He presented the bread and wine to God as *representing* His own sacrificed life, and gave them to the Apostles as *betokening* the fact that forgiveness and eternal life depend on being united to that life. If we had nothing but the Gospels and the narrative of S. Paul before us we should probably interpret the words in some such way as this. But to do so would be to set our own interpretation of a scene at which, after all, we were not present against the consensus of all the first teachers of Christianity, so far as we have any evidence as to what their teaching was. It is quite impossible to make S. Paul's other language square with this merely figurative interpretation. To him it is matter of revelation that to eat and drink the Sacrament is to share in the Body and Blood

[1] S. Mark xiv. 22, 24.

of Christ, to have a real share, he seems to mean, in His Humanity as sacrificed.[1] He speaks of eating the sacred Food without discernment (i.e. without discriminating it from ordinary food) as a dreadful sacrilege, bringing on the soul so guilty the direct punishment of God.[2]

And it is important to observe that S. Paul's only justification for thus speaking was our Lord's declaration at the Last Supper. He said, 'This is My Body'; therefore in breaking and eating 'This' we discern in it the Body, and in feeding upon it have communion with our Lord. The sacramental promise is directly attached to a certain sensible object, and only by implication to the act of eating that object. The only reason for believing in a real feeding upon the Body of Christ is a belief in the Real Presence of that Body before we feed upon it. If the identification between the Bread and the Body is merely figurative there is no reason left for supposing, as S. Paul did suppose, that the act of eating the Bread gives communion with the Body. It is open to us, if we have the hardihood, to say that S. Paul misunderstood our Lord; it is hardly open to us to transfer the Gift which our Lord associated with certain visible objects from those objects to our reception of them. If the Gift is real, then certainly our feeding upon Christ is real. But if the Gift is only figurative, it is difficult to see why our reception of it is not also only figurative.

[1] 1 Cor. x. 16. [2] ibid., xi. 29, cf. margin.

So, again, it would seem impossible to miss the Eucharistic reference in the sixth chapter of S. John.[1] We can say, if it is any satisfaction to us, that eating Christ's Flesh and drinking His Blood is too great a conception to be limited to one sacramental act; but when we remember that those to whom S. John wrote had every Sunday of their Christian lives eaten and drunk Something which they knew Christ had called His Body and Blood, we shall see that they must have interpreted S. John vi to mean that when they received the Sacrament they did actually feed on the sacrificed Humanity of the Lord.

So with one voice the Christian teachers of the first centuries assert the reality of the change which, by means of consecration, has come over the elements of bread and wine. S. Ignatius speaks of the Eucharist as being 'the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, which the Father of His goodness raised up.'[2] S. Justin Martyr says that 'the food over which thanksgiving has been made . . . is both the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus Who was made Flesh'; [3] and S. Irenaeus uses a similar expression and affirms that 'the bread over which the thanksgiving has been said is the Body of their Lord.'[4] And so all through

[1] See especially verses 41–59.

[2] *Ad Smyrn.* vi. [3] *Apol.* i. 66. [4] *Haer.* IV. xviii. 5. For these and other similar quotations see Darwell Stone, *History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist.*

the centuries. It is true that the Fathers also use language which might seem to imply a figurative interpretation of our Lord's words. But it would be a perverse way of using the evidence to make one side of it obliterate the other. The true conclusion surely is that they believed that the Holy Eucharist both signifies and is the sacrificed Body and Blood of Christ. It is a parable but it is also a reality. In the scholastic language of the Thirty-nine Articles it is an 'effectual sign.' Our Lord chose bread and wine as the outward parts of the Sacrament because of their meaning and their symbolism, but this does not hinder Him from making them the vehicles of a real, not merely symbolical, gift of the realities which they signify. And teachers of unquestionable authority assure us that words like 'figure' or 'symbol' from the pens of the writers of the first Christian centuries by no means suggest a merely figurative interpretation.

We may say, then, that the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist does not merely signify the Body and Blood of Christ: it actually *is* that Body and Blood.

But stated as plainly and perhaps as crudely as this, the doctrine inevitably invites certain questions.

Perhaps the question most often asked is, 'How could Christ give to His disciples His Body and Blood, when it was perfectly obvious that His Body was seated at the table, and His

Blood still flowing in His veins ?' The very obviousness of the difficulty ought to suggest caution before the doctrine is accused of being gross or materialistic. It is clear, for the reason contained in the question, that it is not flesh and blood in the ordinary sense that He is offering them, nor flesh and blood under the ordinary limitations of time and space. It is the sacrificed Flesh and Blood which He gives them, although the sacrifice had as yet only taken place in will, not in actual fact. Time as well as space are transcended.

Clearly it is not a transaction which we shall find it easy to define. But the fact that the first Mass took place before the Resurrection ought to put us on our guard against speaking as though we could explain the Real Presence by suggesting that the Body of Christ after its Resurrection attained a new power of, so to say, multiplying itself spiritually. What happened after the Resurrection, or rather after Pentecost, was that the Church attained the power, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, of doing what only our Lord (through the same Spirit) was able to do before.

At the Last Supper our Lord claims to identify the elements with His Body and Blood. The bread and wine are made the spiritual equivalents of the sacrificed Body and Blood, and because this is done by the power of Christ the Incarnate Word, and of His Holy Spirit, therefore it denotes a real change in the spiritual

character of the bread and wine themselves. For the essence of anything is its relation to God. *What it is to God is what it is absolutely.* If the bread and wine are taken into a new relation to God, they are changed more fundamentally than they could be by any outward and visible transformation. It is not that Christ passes into the bread and wine, or projects into them a 'psychic,' or ectoplasmic, semi-material Body and Blood. To think this would be to make the Holy Eucharist either a fairy story or a séance. The change, however described, is a change in the bread and wine, not a change in Christ.[1]

Is this the same as Transubstantiation? Perhaps one might answer that something like this is what that rather unfortunate word ought to mean, but by no means what it is generally made to mean. In origin the doctrine of Transubstantiation was an attempt to get out of materialism by the royal road of the then dominant Aristotelian philosophy. The 'substance' of a thing is the thing in itself, apart from all its physical qualities. This is a way of thinking which seems extraordinarily unnatural to most of us to-day, and to the plain man it has always been unnatural. In con-

[1] For the view that our Lord's action at the Last Supper was not itself a Eucharist but only a fore-shadowing and ordaining of the Eucharist see Dr. H. L. Goudge, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Westminster Commentaries), p. 105; Dr. N. P. Williams, *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 423.

sequence it has never really been possible to get rid of the materialistic associations of the word substance. They crop up again and again, to confuse the issue. Hence all the mediaeval legends about bleeding Hosts and so forth which are so painful and so misleading. Hence also the vehemence of so many of the Reformation champions against the word. Hence also Luther's doctrine of 'consubstantiation,' according to which the Body and Blood are in the Sacrament as a sword is in its sheath. As long as people will think of 'substance' as something extended in space, so long they must avoid the word in their Eucharistic theology on pain of becoming materialistic. But when we get back to the real theological idea of substance this danger disappears. Then the only trouble is whether there is any such thing as the substance of a material object apart from its qualities. No modern philosopher, except a neo-scholastic, would naturally use such a form of expression, and it might be maintained that any one who used the term was thereby committed to Aristotelianism.[1] But the philo-

[1] Dr. Creighton once said: 'It is lawful for any member of the English Church to hold the doctrine of Transubstantiation as the means whereby he reconciles his faith with his reason, provided that he does not try to impose it on others as the only way, or as the authoritative way, of reconciling his faith with his reason. To do so would be, in fact, to assert that Aristotle's philosophy is the true one. It may be; but there is no revelation from God that it is.' (Quoted by H. S. Box in the *E.C.U. Gazette*, June, 1928.)

sophically minded Catholic might perhaps be justified in asking whether the Aristotelian phrase may not still have a possible meaning for him. Is there anything in things, apart from their material qualities, which could be conceived as changed by consecration? If so, what?

The answer will depend on his conception of the nature of reality. The idealist, who believes that the world ultimately consists of a nexus of thought-relations, might say that we hold the qualities together in our minds as being the qualities of some one thing, and that if this is a valid operation we must assume that God does the same. Therefore what corresponds to the Aristotelian idea of the 'substance' of anything will be the fact that in the divine thought they are qualities of the same thing. If, then, the divine view of the ultimate being of a thing is fundamentally changed, then the thing is changed. God's thought about it is the important thing. If He thinks differently about it, then the thing is different. The strict scholastic theologian might maintain that idealism was inconsistent with the Catholic faith:[1] but if we are not prepared to go as far as this, it is hardly a misuse of language to say that God's thought of anything is its real substance.

[1] This was Cardinal Mercier's view. There is an interesting correspondence extant between him and General von Bissing, in which he lays the blame of the war at the door of German idealistic philosophy.

The only point of all this is that there is as a matter of fact very high authority for the use of the term. It is not only that it has been used in the West since the time of the Fourth Lateran Council, but also that a considerable portion of the Orthodox East[1] has accepted an almost identical expression of doctrine. In view of future possibilities of reunion it seems better not to multiply occasions of dispute, and it is surely better to seek for some meaning of 'Transubstantiation' which would be tolerable to the non-scholastic mind, than to follow the usual Anglican practice of saying that you may describe the Real Presence in any way you like, however sentimental or imaginative, so long as you do not use the dreadful traditional word.

This is not to say that it is desirable for Anglicans to use the word. It is, in fact, condemned by the Thirty-nine Articles.[2] There is no need to add to our difficulties by insisting

[1] The Greeks, but not the Slavs.

[2] Two of the reasons assigned, 'that it overthroweth the nature of a sacrament,' and that 'it hath given rise to many superstitions' make it perfectly clear that the sense in which the article uses it is the popular and not the theological one, a sense in which the doctrine is not held to-day by any person of intelligence. Of course, if Transubstantiation meant that the 'appearances' of bread and wine were a mere illusion, that would 'overthrow the nature of a sacrament,' and would justify the hardest things that have ever been said about the 'magical' nature of sacramental beliefs. But that is not the meaning of the word. (See Bp. Hedley, *The Holy Eucharist*, p. 62.)

on using a word so liable to misunderstanding, especially as its original meaning implies a theory of reality which is uncongenial to the modern mind. All that is here contended for is that there is nothing in the word itself, if used in its proper theological sense, which need prove a barrier between ourselves and the Roman or Greek Churches.

On the other hand it is necessary to insist that the earliest Christian tradition does imply that a change is effected by consecration. If we want to be in line with the original doctrine of the Eucharist we shall be more concerned to make this clear than to lay all our emphasis on the later and secondary doctrine of the Personal Presence of Christ, whether in the Sacrament or at the service. Some such phrase as 'Real Change' seems to be demanded by a properly balanced Eucharistic theology, if we decide to abandon the traditional mediaeval word.

Yet the primary doctrine of a 'Real Change' does imply a 'Real Presence' of the adorable Personality of Jesus Christ Himself. We must recognize that this secondary doctrine is not very prominent in the early centuries. Eucharistic worship was worship addressed to God as He is in Himself rather than to God in Manhood. Our Lord's part as God in Manhood was rather to lead us to God, than to be Himself worshipped in His Humanity. Indeed this applies not only to Eucharistic worship but to the whole devotional attitude of the early

Church. 'Jesus-worship' is always in the background.

Yet 'Jesus-worship' was a development which was bound to arise. If it is true that our Lord Jesus Christ is God in human flesh, it cannot be anything but right that regular and systematic worship should be addressed to Him as such. Christians could not be satisfied merely with addressing their supplications to God as made known in Christ; it was inevitable that they should go on to an adoring friendship with Jesus Himself, and should wish to express that tender and affectionate relationship by outward acts of devotion. The germ of it is present in the first generation, as in S. Stephen's commendation of his soul to Christ and in S. Paul's reiterated requests to Him for the removal of the 'thorn in the flesh.' Two generations later we have the testimony of Pliny, for what in a matter of this sort it is worth, that the Christians were accustomed to 'sing a hymn to Christ as God' every Sunday as part of their regular worship. But such things as Litanies of the Passion, or the cult of the Sacred Heart, or hymns like 'Jesu, Lover of my soul,' are redolent of modernity, and, however right in themselves, are secondary, not primary exercises of Christian devotion.

Very similar is the history of the recognition of the Personal Presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, and of the acts of worship which we have learned to pay to Him there.

There is no trace in the first centuries of direct worship addressed to the Eucharistic Christ. The promise was that we should have His Body and Blood, and having them the primitive mind asked no further curious questions as to their relation to the living Christ Himself. Yet all the time the germ of the full truth had lain hidden in the Gospel of S. John. In the great sixth chapter to which we have had to pay attention before, our Lord speaks of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, and then, clearly meaning the same thing, actually speaks of eating Himself.[1] So, little by little, we find, first the adoring attitude of mind and body at the moment of reception, and then the recognition of the Sacrament as implying and conveying a Presence of the adorable Christ Himself. Then come special acts of worship paid to Christ under the sacramental veils. At first such acts are confined to the service, but afterwards it comes to be seen that logically, if the Presence belongs to the Gifts and not to the act of consuming them, we are obliged to pay divine honours to the Holy Sacrament wherever it may be. So at last there arise the special forms which the modern Western Church has developed, partly under the stress of controversy, as means of releasing the pent up devotion and love which we have learned to feel for Christ our Food and Sacrifice. The time of the actual Mass provides no opportunity for the full

[1] S. John vi. 53–57.

expression of all we feel about the Blessed Sacrament. To attempt to express it then and there would be to alter the whole character of the Mass,[1] as the approach to God through Christ.

But this doctrine of the Real Presence raises several questions. That which is most often asked perhaps is, 'Is not Christ present everywhere? What is the point then of saying that He is present in the Holy Sacrament?' The answer to this seems straightforward. For although the Person of Christ is no doubt omnipresent, seeing that that Person is divine, it cannot possibly be true that Christ is everywhere present by means of His Body and Blood. That He is so present in the Eucharist is a corollary from the doctrine that the Sacrament is in some deep spiritual sense His Body and Blood. To be in the bodily Presence of Christ is something different from being in the sight of Him Who sees all things everywhere.

[1] This seems the simplest word to use for the great public service of Christian worship, and it has the advantage—surely it is an advantage—of linking up modern Anglican usage with that of our forefathers and of the rest of the Western Church. It is quite a colourless word in itself, derived from the fact that all are expected to stay in church until they are 'dismissed' at the end of the service. Etymologically it simply means 'dismissal.' It has a tradition of sixteen centuries behind it and to refrain deliberately from using it cannot fail to suggest that the Anglican 'Communion Service' is something different from the historic worship of the Catholic Church.

And ' bodily ' is the very word we must use. We must purify it from all materialistic associations no doubt, and try to arrive at the highest idea of a spiritual body to which we can attain, and even then remember that our earthly minds are sure to have fallen far short of the reality. But the Eucharistic Presence, whatever it may be, is founded on the solid, concrete realities of Body and Blood, and not merely on that other most precious promise that Christ is in the midst of any two or three who are gathered in His Name.

Only we must remember that the Body and Blood do not, so to say, arrive from heaven and take the place of the Bread and Wine. Rather the Bread and Wine become spiritually Things which are no longer subject to the ordinary limitations of space. Those Things are the heavenly Body and Blood of Christ. Consecration does not bring something into being which did not exist before. The Body and Blood of Christ no longer know either increase or decrease. Nor does Consecration destroy anything that existed before. Rather Consecration is a reorientation of the elements so complete and so divine, that as mere elements they have no more importance ; that which lies on the altar is fundamentally the supreme, unchanging reality of that by which God expressed Himself when He became Man. Even the strictest Tridentine theologians teach that Transubstantiation is not the substitution of a new

'Substance' for one which has been destroyed, but the conversion of one 'Substance' into another.[1]

But what do we mean by 'Presence'? The ordinary use of the word has a strong local connotation, but this seems to be ruled out by the considerations which we have just engaged in. It is universally acknowledged that Christ is not present in the Sacrament as in a place.

Can we then think of any form of presence which is other than strictly local? A rough material illustration could be found in the familiar phenomenon of wireless telephony. Here we see very clearly that presence is not necessarily a matter of strictly 'here' or 'there.' It is rather a matter of the apprehension of the activity of a personality. This may be reciprocal, as when two persons are, for example, telephoning to each other; or, as when a message is broadcast, it may be unilateral. Now, apart from the Holy Eucharist it is a commonplace of devotion that our Lord and ourselves are reciprocally in the presence each of the other. Inasmuch as He is God He is of course conscious of all we think and are, and we may also feel sure that in the power of His glorified human intelligence and compassionate human heart He is able to hear our prayers and feel for our joys and sorrows individually. Conversely by means of the Holy Spirit He is personally active in our hearts and consciences

[1] Hedley, *The Holy Eucharist*, p. 49.

to an extent only limited by the extent of our own receptiveness.

The question is, What is added to this by His special bodily Presence in the Holy Eucharist? We may answer (*a*)[1] the permanent possibility of a special spiritual experience, that of Communion, and, depending upon this, (*b*) a certain definite and unique apprehension of His activity. But that which is added is unilateral. It is not that Christ can hear our prayers more clearly, nor (need it be said?) that He is conscious by sense-perception of the smooth coolness of paten or chalice, or of the darkness and constraint of the tabernacle, but rather that He makes Himself known to us in this appointed way. As with the artist in the broadcasting studio, the activity is all on His side, the apprehension all on ours. The waves of spiritual power flow from Him to us. He therefore is specially present to us; but we are not, so far as we know, *specially* present to Him. There is no reason to suppose that our Lord is more acutely conscious of those who are kneeling before the altar or the tabernacle than of those who are kneeling elsewhere.

But we shall never think rightly of the adorable Presence of our Lord under the forms of bread and wine in the Holy Eucharist if we fail to remember the significance of these forms. They are the material of the Christian Sacrifice,

[1] With Mr. Will Spens, the Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 442.

and they are food and drink. Therefore, however much we rightly emphasize the reality and objectivity of the sacred Presence of the Eucharist, it is probably well to remember that it is the Presence not so much of Christ *simpliciter*, or even of Christ as King, but of Christ our Priest, and Christ our Food. So long as this is remembered and constantly taught, there will be little danger that devotion to the personal Presence of our Lord in His Sacrament, even when 'extra-liturgical,' will lead us to forget the purposes for which He is present.

Now, of course, it may be said that all this is 'highbrow' stuff, and useless to the plain man. It may also be said, by the Evangelical 'highbrow,' 'If that is what you mean, I do not see much to object to. What we Evangelicals dislike is the crudity of your ordinary teaching.' But surely that is precisely the difficulty all the way through. We must put things simply, even at the cost of being crude. The philosophical Evangelical would not really be satisfied with the crude statement that the Lord's Supper is a purely ceremonial action like the sign of the Cross. Let us hope by all means that what thoughtful and devout people on both sides really mean is not so very different ultimately, and that where the difference is real it is more one of expression and emphasis than anything else.

If this is happily the case, we still have to settle what is the best simple expression and

emphasis for simple people. Shall our expression be, 'This is the Body of Christ,' or 'This is a type of the Body of Christ?' We submit that Evangelicals of all people ought not to be offended if we prefer to use the actual words of the Gospel narrative. Shall our emphasis be on the outward appearance or on the inward reality? Again, it is surely no reproach if we urge our simple folk to 'look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'[1] If it be true that the Eucharist gives us an immediate contact with Christ in His present and eternal glory, we cannot be misrepresenting the truth when we say that what is on the altar is the Body and Blood of the Lord, and that therefore we are in the veiled presence of our Incarnate God. For the Holy Eucharist is heaven itself, all but the Beatific Vision.

We hold, then, that the effect of our Lord's words of thanksgiving was to consecrate the bread and wine in such a way that both then and for the future the Eucharistic Gifts should be identical with His own eternal Sacrifice.

It ought not to be necessary to labour the point that the Holy Eucharist is rightly spoken of as a sacrifice.

Holy Scripture alone seems decisive on the subject. The actual account of the Institution is redolent of sacrifice almost in every word. A

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 18.

'Body' given 'on behalf of' men : 'Blood shed for the remission of sins' : 'Blood of the Covenant' : 'Memorial' : all this is the language of sacrifice. The whole idea of consuming sacred Food and Drink is sacrificial.

So too, S. Paul does not hesitate to compare it even with the heathen sacrifices, and his argument that Christians, Jews, and heathen alike have communion with the God, or the devils, at whose table they feast, would be pointless unless the three contrasted forms of religious communion were based upon some common idea.[1]

The Epistle to the Hebrews also lays stress on the idea that Christians have an altar from which they eat. This 'altar' is not, of course, the material altar-table used in the Christian mysteries, but it is difficult not to see an allusion to the Eucharist itself.[2]

As to witness of the Fathers there can be no doubt. With one voice they speak of the Eucharist as an offering.

The sense in which it is a sacrifice is naturally less easy to determine. It is sometimes maintained that the primitive view was that the sacrifice consisted merely in the offering of bread and wine. This may perhaps be the case as regards the Fathers of the second century, a period during which Christian theology was still inchoate. From the third century onwards it seems impossible to dispute that the offer-

[1] 1 Cor. x. 14–21. [2] Heb. xiii. 10.

ing of the Eucharist was identified with that of our Lord Himself.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the Eastern liturgies, by putting the effective words of Consecration after the words of offering, give some support to the idea that what is offered to God is bread and wine, and that the Consecration is God's act whereby He returns them to us as the Body and Blood of Christ. This, however, is not the doctrine of the Orthodox Church, and a little thought seems to rule it out as unworthy. It is surely a commonplace of Christianity that the only Offering we can plead before God is the One Oblation of the Sacrifice of Christ. Whether we do this in the Mass or not has of course been disputed, but if the Mass is a sacrifice at all, it cannot be less than this.

On the other side, we have to be on our guard against the idea that each Mass is a separate sacrifice with its own independent value, so that two Masses are twice as valuable as one. Subjectively no doubt they may be. If a priest says Mass seven times in a week he has done the most glorious and beautiful thing possible seven times, and that is better than only doing it once. But objectively no Mass can add anything to that One Sacrifice, which is one, not as being less than two, but as including all.

The Sacrifice of our Lord has two sides, the Godward and the manward. On the one hand

He has dedicated Himself to that perfect obedience which is the essence of perfect worship, and this self-dedication, though 'only once and once for all' carried out to its awful consequence, is an abiding fact. Every Mass is the ritual expression of that fact, and also the appointed means by which we claim our share in it. The essential impulse of the religious mind is that of self-dedication. But the self-oblation of Christ is the only offering which for its own excellence deserves acceptance. Nothing but the best is good enough to be offered to God. The Mass enables us to witness and approve the perfect worship which Christ offers on our behalf. By our own action we can claim a share in His. We can say our *Amen* to His giving of thanks. And this we must do if we are in any way to share its merits. We bring the appointed gifts of bread and wine, and lay them on the altar as representing the offering of ourselves and our lives which we should wish to make. God accepts them and identifies them with the perfect oblation of His Son.

But so far almost any symbolism would have served to express our longing to offer obedience and adoration in the spirit of Christ. It is necessary to add something about the particular symbolism which our Lord chose for the Sacrifice of the new law.

It is a strange fact that although from Apostolic times it was taken for granted that the Mass was in a special sense a commemoration

of the Passion and Death of Christ, it was not apparently until the thirteenth century that any attempt was made to show in what sense this was the case. It was Alexander of Hales who was the first to see in the fact that two separate elements are consecrated a definite allusion to the separation of the Lord's Body and Blood on the Cross.[1] When once pointed out it seems so obvious as to be inevitable. Indeed, in the dominant Roman Catholic theology this teaching has had the unfortunate effect of limiting the idea of sacrifice to the representation of the sacrificial Death of Calvary ; it has almost excluded the thought of the eternal pleading of the Risen and Ascended Christ. It is only a question of emphasis. It seems true that up to a point the late mediaeval insistence on the identification of the Mass with Calvary was a return to the primary intention of our Lord and to the teaching of S. Paul, to whom the Eucharist was essentially a showing of the Lord's Death ; but we have every reason to be grateful to those who have taught us to combine with that the rich primitive and patristic doctrine of the altar in the heavens.

But there is a further significance in the fact that our Lord bade us make our offering under the symbols of food and drink. This symbolism expresses the fact that the power and efficacy of Christ's oblation can be individually appropriated by His disciples. Here is the manward

[1] Darwell Stone, *The Holy Communion*, p. 110.

side of the Mass by which its Godward side is completed. God accepts us because we are already by membership in the Church united with His Son, but the acceptance gives us access to a union which becomes progressively fuller and deeper as we feed upon Christ, and so more and more completely absorb Him into ourselves. Christ not only gives Himself to God as representative Man, but as God Incarnate gives Himself to man. The two actions of oblation and communion blend together and produce the perfect Sacrifice.

We have seen that our Lord Himself seems to have consecrated the Holy Eucharist by the simple act of thanksgiving. And no doubt the Church at first did the same. To this day the great central prayer[1] in every liturgy begins in the same way : 'Lift up your hearts . . . Let us give thanks. . . . It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks.' And so the great act of praise proceeds, incorporating into itself the thankful remembrance of all God's mercies, and especially of the Death and Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord.

As time went on, however, and as the Church spread far beyond the limits of the Jewish race with their special emphasis on the consecratory power of thanksgiving, it became natural to incorporate both a solemn recital of the scene and circumstances and, above all,

[1] Known to liturgical students as the *Anaphora*.

the words of the Institution,[1] and also a prayer that God would honour the promise then given by His Son, and make the bread and wine to be His Flesh and Blood. Both these features occur in every known Eucharistic liturgy, but the emphasis on each of them varies. In the third or fourth century we find after the recital of the words of institution a prayer that the Holy Spirit may sanctify the oblation. In the later Eastern liturgies this prayer is so developed as to make it clear that it is thought of as completing the Consecration, although no doubt it is always thought necessary first to recite the words of institution as the Church's authority for what she is doing. This method of Consecration has been adopted not only by the Eastern Orthodox Church, but by many parts of the Anglican Communion, and, as an alternative, and in a modified form, in the Prayer-Books of 1927 and 1928.

The Roman Liturgy, which was finally adopted almost universally in the West, adopts a slightly different method. Like the Eastern rites, it employs both prayer and words of Institution, but by transposing them has given the greater prominence to the latter.

It is clear that if two things are necessary for Consecration, Consecration is not complete until both have been accomplished. It is the second of the two which actually consummates

[1] If indeed there ever was a time when there was no such recital.

the Consecration. Thus with the Roman rite, and hitherto with the English rite, all the emphasis has fallen on the words of Institution, and the prayer has even come to be thought of as edifying no doubt, but strictly speaking unnecessary. The priest says the words in the Person of Christ, and they are not only declaratory but effective. On the other hand, the Eastern rites, retaining the invocation of the Holy Spirit after the words of Institution, naturally lay all the emphasis on this, and the Sacrament is not considered to be consecrated until the Invocation has been said. It seems to be essentially a difference between the methods adopted in different rites, rather than in the theory of what is necessary for due Consecration. The Roman Catholic theologians accept the validity of the Eastern rites and inculcate the use of them by Easterns in communion with the Pope. But by insisting that the essential form of consecration is in any case the recital of the words of Institution they seem prima facie to deprive of all meaning the subsequent invocation of the Holy Ghost.

The distinctive worship of the Church is Eucharistic worship. This ought not to need to be said. But it is only too obvious that in the minds of very many the staple worship of the Church of England consists in the services of Morning and Evening Prayer with the Communion Service as an occasional extra. Nothing could be more unlike the customs of the universal

Church, and nothing could be more indefensible than any arrangement of services which would give colour to such ideas. Yet it is easy to understand how they arose. During the Middle Ages the Mass came to be thought of as a service of offering only. It is true, of course, that the celebrating priest always did receive Holy Communion himself as the climax of the service. The Church has always insisted on this. But various circumstances had combined to make very rare indeed for any one to receive with him. In course of time it came to be seen that this was a corruption. That is not disputed anywhere. But different parts of the Church took different steps to remedy it.

The Roman Church contented itself with a wish (which for long remained nothing more) that at every Mass some at least of the faithful would receive Communion. The wish is at last beginning to bear some fruit, for although at most Masses there are no communicants except the priest, the habit of frequent Communion is growing, and the tendency of authority is now to encourage the faithful to receive Holy Communion at Mass if possible, rather than be content to receive the Reserved Sacrament without being present at Mass at the same time.

The Church of England took a far more drastic course. While never going so far as to take the extreme step of forbidding the attendance of those who were not prepared to communicate, she attempted to bring in fre-

quent Communion quickly by making an ordinance that the Mass was not to be completed at all unless a certain proportion of parishioners had signified their intention of communicating. In Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches, where there were many priests and deacons, it was definitely ordered that they should all communicate every Sunday and Holy Day, and thus secure that in these churches at least there should always be a celebration of the Eucharist. This is an indication of the real intention of the new rule. It was never meant to abandon the Sunday Mass, but only to 'turn it into a Communion'; in other words to take care that at every Mass there should be a good number of communicants.

The result, however, was only what might have been foreseen. You cannot change a people's deep-rooted religious habits all in a moment. Names were not sent in every Sunday: very far from it. It must be remembered that the universal custom had been to communicate only once in the year. So the new Church law took its course, and in parish churches throughout the country on Sunday after Sunday the service was cut short just as the important part was about to begin. It is no good using harsh language about it. The motive of the Reformers in trying to re-establish a general Communion as the natural climax of the service was a good one. But the actual result of their hasty action was to remove

the idea of the Eucharist as the characteristic Christian act of worship altogether from the minds of Church of England people.

This is the error which the Anglo-Catholic Movement is now striving, amid much misunderstanding and hostility, to remedy. And after all, we are coming to see, no such violent action was really necessary. For while it is quite true that the full idea of Christian sacrifice includes both Oblation and Communion, it does not in the least follow that we may never reap the benefit of one without the other. No doubt on the day when all English Church people become both devout and leisured it will be possible to expect a general Communion every Sunday : but until that happens we have to be content with less. If we get our people to be present and take their share in the Offering every Sunday, and to receive Communion when it has been possible for them to make a proper preparation, that is no small thing.

If that is all that we can aim at as an immediate objective (not forgetting of course our ultimate aim), it will mean that we must accustom the people of England, as we have opportunity, to the idea that the Mass is the great Christian service, without worrying ourselves overmuch as to whether they are prepared to receive every Sunday or not. Very often it will be found that this involves having the service at an hour when they will be very unlikely to receive, if they have been taught to observe

the 'ancient and laudable custom' of fasting. This is not ideal, but it is far nearer the ideal than is the usual post-Reformation Anglican custom. So, again, we shall have to be ready to meet the needs of those whose business really does prevent them from coming to receive at the time when the Offering is made. Once more, it is not ideal to receive Holy Communion with no more service than a confession, an absolution, and a thanksgiving; but it is much further from the ideal only to receive very infrequently or not at all.

These are really matters in which Christians, apart from temporary reactions, are very rapidly coming together. On the one side it is being recognized that hearing Mass and receiving Communion normally go together. On the other there are few who would say that it could never be right to be present at the Holy Communion Service without communicating or to communicate when prevented from being present. Here, then, are all the elements for a reconciliation.

CHAPTER IX

PENANCE[1]

THERE can be little doubt that our Lord gave His Church authority to deal with sin. How far we can press the exact words in which S. John tells us that He did so may be open to question. Like the formula for Baptism as given by S. Matthew, they seem to some minds too 'ecclesiastical' to ring quite true on the lips of our Lord Himself. While it would be rash in the extreme to say, 'He could not have said that,' there is enough force in the contention to make us hesitate before laying the whole weight of our belief on the actual 'words of institution.' But it is clear that the author of the fourth Gospel wishes to assure us that when the Apostles claimed in His Name to forgive sins they had His own express authority to do so. That they did so claim seems indubitable, and it is beyond belief that they could have done so without some authorization. That God alone could forgive was axiomatic for a Jew,

[1] For the historical part of this chapter the author is indebted to the *History of Penance*, by O. D. Watkins.

The substance of the chapter has already appeared in *The Green Quarterly*, and the author desires to thank the Editor for his courteous permission to recast it.

as indeed it is for any one who really believes in God at all. For what such a one wants to know is precisely whether *God* has forgiven him. A divine forgiveness is the only forgiveness which matters.

It is natural that at first all the stress should have been laid on the forgiveness which is associated with Baptism. The idea that the baptized man or woman could go on sinning was evidently a horrible surprise to the primitive Church. The classic and original Apostolic offer of forgiveness is that uttered by S. Peter on the Day of Pentecost : 'Be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins.'[1] It is repeated as a commonplace of Christian teaching by Ananias, the baptizer of Saul : 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.'[2] And S. Paul's own stress on the cleansing power of Baptism is so great that it seems certain that when he speaks of himself as 'the chief of sinners'[3] he is referring to the experience of his pre-Christian past. Baptism as administered by S. John the Baptist had been accompanied by actual confession of sin, and in any case the whole symbolism of the rite implies the need of cleansing, and the whole point of Christian Baptism is that it actually meets that need.

It is therefore the less surprising that the Church is at first quite incapable of dealing with an obvious return to sin on the part of the

[1] Acts ii. 38. [2] ibid., xxii. 16. [3] 1 Tim. i. 15.

baptized. There is nothing to do except to deliver him over to Satan, as S. Paul did with the incestuous Corinthian.[1] In that case it seems not unnatural that he should even fall down dead, like Ananias and Sapphira.[2] The Epistle to the Hebrews goes so far as to say that it is impossible to renew him again to repentance. And the Second Epistle of S. Peter can only speak of 'the dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.'[3]

Yet already there are signs of a milder spirit, and hints that the Church has some duty even to the excommunicate. S. Paul reconciles the Corinthian sinner, 'in the person of Christ.'[4] The confessions at Ephesus of Acts xix. 18 were apparently made by men who were already Christian, and we may presume that they were followed by reconciliation.

A partial solution of the difficulty may be found in the First Epistle of S. John. He there simply places side by side two incompatible facts, that of universal guilt and that of Christian sinlessness, but gives a hint of a partial solution of the difficulty by his distinction between 'sin unto death' and 'sin not unto death.'[5] The latter is a simple matter to be dealt with by intercessory prayer; about the former he makes no suggestion, but implies that prayer is not sufficient to meet such a tragedy as this.

[1] 1 Cor. v. 3–5. [2] Acts v. [3] 2 S. Pet. ii. 22.
[4] 2 Cor. ii. 10. [5] S. John i. 8; v. 18, 16, 17.

From this point the idea of Penance, or the Church's way of dealing with the sins of Christians, flows along two channels, destined ultimately to unite.

I. PUBLIC OR 'CANONICAL' PENANCE

This is essentially an ecclesiastical punishment for sin, which may or may not be followed by reconciliation. In the primitive Church it was of extraordinary severity. The penitent fasted, rolled at the feet of the faithful, covered himself in sackcloth and ashes, and was excluded from Mass and Communion. Even if Absolution was granted in the end, the stigma of having been a penitent remained, and the forgiven sinner was expected to pass the remainder of his life in some considerable degree of asceticism. Yet to be admitted to Penance was always accounted a privilege. For although, as was natural, excommunication was commonly decreed on the bishop's initiative, Penance was never granted save at the penitent's request, and never more than once in a lifetime.

This form of Penance is in origin a voluntary way of proving penitence on the part of a person who is suffering from the heaviest possible ecclesiastical punishment, a life sentence of excommunication.

We have to ask what kind of person was permitted to try to make good in this way? The only difficulty about answering the ques-

tion is that custom varied at different dates. But it was all a matter of the gravity and the openness of the sin. We have seen how from the beginning the mind of the Apostles was to make a marked difference between sin unto death and sin not unto death. Until a date towards the end of the fourth century (i.e. soon after the conversion of Constantine) sins were divided into three classes. (1) Murder, adultery, idolatry. These were admitted to Penance but not to the hope of Absolution. That is to say, Penance was directed to the hope of gaining the ultimate forgiveness of God, but of such sinners the Church almost washed her hands, and in any case declined the responsibility of readmitting them to Communion. (2) Other serious sins, such as fornication, cursing, joining in idolatrous ceremonies to a degree short of actual apostasy. Those guilty of such sins were admitted to Penance (once only) with the hope of Absolution. (3) Lesser sins, which were not punished with excommunication and to which public Penance was therefore inapplicable.

Before the end of this period we already find the beginnings of voluntary private confession of such sins as would bring an offender under the sentence of excommunication. In other words, Penance was sometimes in use for sins which had not been detected.

This system was the 'godly discipline' mentioned in the Commination service of 1662. It was, perhaps, well enough suited for the primi-

tive purity of the ages of persecution, but its subsequent history has been one of decay. By the fifth century it had become as unsatisfactory as could well be imagined. The period since the conversion of Constantine had brought the world into the Church only too effectively. It was a time of coarse and widespread vice. The fact that there was only one possibility of Penance in a lifetime made men hesitate to avail themselves of it by confessing their sins and submitting to excommunication. Some therefore continued to approach the altar, when they knew only too well that they needed reconciliation. Others refrained from Communion altogether, trusting to a deathbed penitence. There was no regular and organized ministry to meet the needs of the habitual sinner whose heart, as we should say, was in the right place, and who was, perhaps for the hundredth time, as sincerely penitent as he knew how to be. The doors of the divine hostelry had been flung open wide enough, but facts had not been faced in regard to the character of the guests who had been so readily admitted. In theory they were the successors of the saints and martyrs of the earlier age ; in reality they were, many of them, of very different stuff.

The truth was that the ' godly discipline ' was all too little Evangelical. In the Gospels our Lord's sternness is manifested chiefly towards sins of thought and of neglect : the primitive Church almost ignored them. Our

Lord was merciful to open sinners : the primitive Church was harsh. Our Lord granted forgiveness swiftly at the first sign of penitence : the primitive Church gave it grudgingly after a long term of humiliating Penance. Our Lord gave His Church power to remit or retain : the primitive Church seemed more bent on retention than remission. Our Lord bade us forgive unto seventy times seven: the primitive Church drew the line at twice, including Baptism. The final stage of legalism may seem to have been reached when definite tariffs are drawn up assigning so many days of Penance to every known serious sin. We can hardly deny that there was much need for the Church to modify her system of penitence very considerably, if on the one hand it was to be practical, and if on the other she was really purporting to act ' in the person of Christ.'

II. PRIVATE PENANCE

So far we have been almost entirely concerned with what we call the *forum externum* of the Church. But we have seen that in modern times it is the *forum internum*, or the confessional, which is the more conspicuous department of discipline.

To understand the evolution of this modern system we must go back and consider its second source; for we must not suppose that even in early days there was no overt way of expressing

sorrow for sin, and seeking pardon except that of submitting to public Penance.

As early as the Epistle of S. James[1] we find the idea of confessing to others as a preliminary to the prayer which would win forgiveness. It seems to be implied in this case that those to whom the confession is made are the elders, i.e. presbyters or priests, but there is no idea of disciplinary action, and no excommunication in the background.

So S. John reminds his disciples that forgiveness follows confession, and teaches that it is granted in answer to the prayer of the Church.[2] There is no suggestion that the prayer is offered by a priest, and he clearly warns us that his words apply only to 'a sin which is not unto death.' Also in what appears to be a Jewish Christian community, which has left a record of its customs in the so-called *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, we find that it was there usual to begin the Eucharistic liturgy with a mutual and detailed confession of sins.[3] Here too there is no suggestion of priestly absolution.

There probably never was a time when it was not the custom for those whose conscience was uneasy to seek out a spiritual person, whether priest or not, for help in the great work of penitence. But all this differs from the public system of Canonical Penance in being private and unofficial, and more concerned with peni-

[1] S. Jas. v. 15, 16. [2] 1 S. John i. 9; v. 16.
[3] *Did.* xiv.

tence as a means to forgiveness than with punishment as a condition of it.

III. THE COMBINATION OF THE TWO SYSTEMS

For many centuries these two streams seem to flow side by side. On the one hand there is a hard, official and judicial system, definitely founded on the inherent power of the Church to judge sins in the Name of Christ, and administered by the bishop and his delegates. On the other there is a more merciful and spiritual discipline, on the surface far more resembling the modern confessional, but lacking what is in fact the primary motive of 'going to confession,' namely, the definitive sentence of Absolution given by some one who has a right to speak for the Church, and so for Christ.

The former system was in theory almost universal from the beginning; only, as we have seen, it failed to fulfil its proper function; there was widespread revolt against submitting to it if it could be avoided. But there was one part of the Church where Canonical Penance was never known, and that was Ireland, together with Iona and the other districts evangelized by the Celtic Church. In the Celtic Church the bishop was not the ruler of a diocese, but an official whose sole distinctive functions were ministerial. He ordained and confirmed, but he did not govern. Jurisdiction, if we can use such a

technical word at all, was in the hands of the abbots of the monasteries. In the absence of the public and official system, private and unofficial confession became very prominent. Uneasy consciences would resort to a monastery, and make confession to a spiritual guide ; a monk but not necessarily a priest.[1]

The Celtic system of discipline was abnormal, but the Celtic penitential customs were destined to have an extraordinary effect on the history of Penance. Introduced into Burgundy by the great missionary S. Columban, they proved of wonderful service in attracting to confession many of those who were refusing to submit to the older and far stricter discipline.

In England the great archbishop, S. Theodore, whose life-work it was to weld together Roman and Celtic Christianity, accepted the new method whole-heartedly, and brought it under episcopal authority, and it seems that Public Penance as a preliminary to sacramental Absolution has never been known in this country.

The bringing of the private system under the authority of the bishops, and the confining of the right to hear confessions to priests, were the two things necessary to bring about the confluence of the two traditions.[2] Now at last the

[1] It appears that this is still customary in the Orthodox East. For an illustration of a gross corruption of a similar practice, see Mr. Stephen Graham's *The Lay Confessor*.

[2] This development seems to have taken place in this country by the time of the Venerable Bede.

ecclesiastical authority of the judicial system is combined with the evangelical power of the medicinal one, and sins which in earlier centuries and other countries would have been publicly punished by the ancient severe discipline, even after private confession, could now be dealt with finally by a confessor having authority from the bishop to exercise in private the power of the keys.

This was the system which, under the influence of Charlemagne, afterwards spread all over Western Europe, until at last, but not until the twelfth century, it arrived in the conservative city of Rome. Less than a hundred years later the Fourth Lateran Council made it compulsory on all persons who had arrived at years of discretion. The revolution is complete. Almost the entire weight of sacerdotal authority has been transferred from the *forum externum* to the secrecy of the confessional, and whereas the great object of the older discipline was to exclude the unworthy from Communion, the milder modern system is almost entirely occupied in the restoration of the penitent.

We have seen that this mildness is in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel. But it must be remembered that there is another side on which the present system is sterner than the ancient one, and that is in its definition of 'the sin unto death.' It was, as a rule, only scandalous sin that was dealt with by the ancient canonical Penance. But

later ages have come to see that, although no doubt it is always unjust and usually impossible to visit private sin with public punishment, yet in the matter of guilt the notoriety of a sin has very little to do with its wickedness. A thing may easily be a 'mortal sin' in the modern phrase and yet known to no one but the man who has committed it. Any sin which really deflects a man's will completely from the true end of life also alienates him from God. Therefore the modern definition of mortal sin is 'sin in a serious matter, committed with full knowledge and full intent.' Sin of this character puts a man in mortal danger, and as long as he is in this frame of mind he is necessarily living under the condemnation of God.

To deny this is to eviscerate the moral teaching of our Lord of the whole of its severity. But to accept it is to say that such a man's need of repentance and forgiveness is the most vital spiritual need in the world. It is greater than the need of the heathen who have never known God. Therefore with our new recognition of the scope of mortal sin there goes of necessity a new sense of the scope of the Sacrament of Penance. If an innocent babe needs Baptism, much more does a guilty man need Absolution. It is not only the scandalous sinner, as the practice of the primitive Church seemed to assume, but the proud, the uncharitable, the mentally impure, the slothful, and the negligent who is in danger of the wrath of God. Could any-

thing more exactly match the teaching of our Lord, and could anything more fully justify the practice of the later ages of the Church in saying that it is for just such cases that the Sacrament of Penance exists ?

This is not to say that God does not forgive the penitent. Of course He does, the moment that his penitence is real. But if the Church is really the visible embodiment of Christ on earth, then it is consonant with the whole of the rest of the sacramental system that there should be some outward act by which that forgiveness should be expressed, and by which the penitent should be assured of it. There is no surer way by which a man may test the sincerity of his own penitence than by his readiness to acknowledge his sin, even though the wisdom and mercy of the Holy Spirit has guided the Church to make the actual humiliation of confession as slight as is consistent with its being a real showing of the matter to the Church.

The development which has taken place is partly one of machinery, but partly also a new appreciation of the grievousness of personal sin in itself apart from any question of scandal. In regard to the machinery of the matter it will hardly be questioned that the confessional is preferable in most cases to sackcloth and the white sheet ; in regard to the guilt of private sin it seems impossible to deny that the development is in accordance with the Spirit of Christ.

It does not then seem too much to say that if

our conscience convicts us of sin which really implies that then and there we did knowingly and deliberately avert our wills from God, it is our duty to seek our restoration through the Church: in other words to make our confession. That is common ground to the whole Catholic Church, and we have mercifully been preserved from any attempt to set up a 'distinctive Anglican doctrine.' The Book of Common Prayer shows no sign of an intention to depart from the teaching that mortal sin needs sacramental absolution.[1]

It has been well said[2] that if any one asked one of the Apostles, 'Do you really believe that you have the power to remit sins?' he might well have answered, 'Of course I do. I am remitting sins every day in the laver of Baptism.' The same principle applies to Absolution. It is not—of course it is not—a peculiar power of forgiving those who God might not be willing to forgive. It is rather, as a well-known Anglican liturgical formula phrases it, a power 'to declare unto his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins.' But in the nature of things this declaration can only be made when evidence of penitence has been given. Without confession there can be no such evidence. No priest could dare to say to any one individually, 'By His authority com-

[1] See especially the rubric on this matter in the *Order for the Visitation of the Sick.*

[2] By Canon V. S. S. Coles.

mitted to me I absolve thee from all thy sins,' unless he had a moral certainty that the person to whom he said the tremendous words was really as penitent as he was able to be.

Are we then to say that the penitent is forgiven the moment he repents, and that the absolution is therefore merely declaratory of something which has already taken place? Certainly, in every case of a full and true repentance, God forgives immediately. To believe less than this would be to belie His character as it is made known to us in the Gospel. But as long as we are in the body both repentance and forgiveness need what educationists call 'expression work.' A penitence that remains unexpressed is incomplete; and a forgiveness that remains unexpressed is difficult to realize.

Nor must we forget the case, by no means an infrequent one, when penitence is so weak and inchoate that it is only in the moment of expression that it really comes to itself. We are penitent in a sort of way, but our faith and love are so weak that we need the overt act of going to the priest as to our Lord, and telling out our sins before we can begin to feel the true smart of contrition.

But even when it is acknowledged that in case of mortal sin there is a real necessity for Absolution, it is often urged that the Church of England leaves its use optional where no mortal sin seems to have been committed. Perhaps this is the case, and it may be acknowledged

that the English Church could have abolished for her own members the purely ecclesiastical regulation that confession is to be made at least once a year. The only question is whether by any formal act she has ever done so.

But after all this is a pettifogging matter. No one really desires a formal annual confession merely because 'the Church says you must.' Almost anything is better than a confession which is extorted by external authority. And the real point is that experience has shown that the advantages of confession are by no means exhausted by the cases in which it is urgently necessary. It is the part of Christian humility to act as though we were grievous sinners, and it is impossible to say or write the words without the thought arising, 'And that indeed is what we are.' Who are we to say that in our case there is no need of such humiliation? So men have felt, and on that feeling have acted; and thus there has sprung up in the Catholic Church a deep conviction that regular confession for all sinners is an immense means to sanctification, and that no good purpose is served by always asking, 'Are my sins bad enough to need Absolution?' After all the penitent's kneeling-place is the 'lowest room' in the church, and we have the greatest authority for being sure that we can never be wrong in claiming that.

So in practice there has come about a further development, that which is called the 'confession of devotion'; that is to say a confession which

does not seem necessary either for the forgiveness of mortal sin, which *ex hypothesi* has not been committed, nor to satisfy the precept of the Western Church that we should go to confession at least once in the year. Experience has taught us how valuable a thing it is to make this definite and overt act of penitence, and how much the regular use of it enables us to make progress in the battle against sin. Relying on this experience, which is that of all, or almost all, who have made the experiment, the Catholic Christian goes to confession at stated intervals, not because any one says, or can say, that he must, but because he knows that it is good for him ; or, more simply, because he wants to.

CHAPTER X

GRACE

FEW words are more commonly used in theological writing than 'grace,' yet it is probably true that there are few words which produce a more blurred impression on the mind of the untheological reader. It is for this type of reader that this book is intended, and it may therefore be worth while to try to set out some part at least of its meaning.

It is a favourite word of S. Paul, and we shall therefore expect it to be one of the keywords of his theology. Now this theology is largely controversial, and the arguments in the course of which he relies so often on the idea of 'grace,' are arguments to prove that a man cannot build up his own salvation, but must accept the merciful good will of God towards himself. This is always the contention underlying the word, whether it is used to express something in the character of God, or something in His method of action, or the ground on which he pardons sins and accepts the sinner, or finally the actual power which flows forth from Him to transform human nature and make it what it was always intended to be. The point is always that a man

cannot save himself, or recommend himself to God, or change his own character. God must be beforehand with him all the time. The correlative human virtue is faith, not in the sense of trust in which our Lord used it, nor in the sense of a right belief, but in the sense of acceptance.

As used by S. Paul the word marks the transition of thought from the pure transcendence of the Jewish idea of God towards the characteristically Christian view that He is both transcendent and immanent. The Jewish attitude could be expressed somewhat as follows. God is one : I am another. I must approve myself to God. He has given commandments : I can and must keep them. The better I keep them the more favour (or grace) I shall find in His sight. If I keep them perfectly I shall have a right to ' Abraham's bosom.'

This position S. Paul counters at almost every point. God, he would assure us, is not so separate from us as all that. ' In Him we live and move and have our being' (a Greek thought, as he acknowledges).[1] As long as we insist on looking at ourselves in this way we shall not ultimately find it possible to keep His commandments. *Experto crede.* It is only spiritual blindness which could ever make us imagine that we could. The true creaturely attitude is dependence. I can never make God my debtor. That would be impossible from the very fact

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

that I owe every moment of existence to Him. It is equally impossible from the two other facts of my past sins and present weakness. Therefore I must accept everything from God. That is all that my boasted natural freedom amounts to, and even the power to accept ('faith') is the gift of God. (Whence comes the power to refuse is a question that S. Paul does not discuss.) From God, then, I must accept pardon, life, power. If I do so, I shall experience a new kind of righteousness. This righteousness will mean first that I am 'right with God,' and that I can place between myself and the wrath of God the covering of a righteousness which is not my own, but Christ's.

If S. Paul had left the matter there it might seem that the justice of God's dealings with us left something to be desired, but the morality of the Pauline teaching is saved by his great doctrine of union with Christ through the Holy Spirit Who indwells us. In virtue of this the grand discovery is made that the new righteousness, accepted in faith, is not only vastly higher than the old Pharisaic conception, but is actually attainable. Grace comes to spell freedom, goodness, the actual carrying out into practice of 'the requirement of the law.'[1] All this comes about as naturally (or as wonderfully) as fruit grows from its own proper tree. Only there is nothing to boast about. The whole thing is the

[1] Rom. viii. 4, R.V. margin. 'The just demand of the law' might be an even better translation.

gift of God, and the token of the indwelling of Christ through the Holy Ghost.

Thus 'grace' is started on its long theological career. Different aspects of it are prominent at different stages, but the whole of its future is present in germ in the Pauline teaching.

We may refer to two of these stages. The first is the dispute between S. Augustine and Pelagius in the fifth century. Pelagius had maintained that man requires no divine assistance in order to live a perfect life. God has given him free will and that is sufficient. S. Augustine countered with a new emphasis on the doctrine that we can do nothing at all without the grace of God. Man's freedom is nothing. God's grace is everything.

The controversy is not exactly the same as that in which S. Paul was engaged. To S. Paul the difference was between works done in a bargaining spirit and good works which flowed out freely from the 'faithful' soul in response to grace. To S. Augustine it was rather a question as to whether the human will contributes anything at all to salvation. While not denying formally the freedom of the will, he lays such stress on the divine activity at every point, and so exaggerates the weakness and wickedness of man and his natural hostility to God that in the end grace comes to mean something very like the extinguishing of human personality altogether. But although the Catholic Church has not followed the African doctor all the way,

he has left his ineradicable mark on the theological meaning of the word. Grace, since Augustine, has meant divine power enabling us to do works which are pleasing to God, and it is opposed not so much to the 'works of the law' as to the unassisted human will.

The mediaeval theologians conceived a more elaborate scheme. According to them we must divide grace into habitual and actual. Habitual grace is a state of the soul in which it is pleasing to God and able to perform good works. This grace is imparted to us in Baptism, and, if we lose it by mortal sin, it can be restored to us by Absolution. (It is, of course, to be understood that neither of these Sacraments nor any other can be of any profit if the disposition of the soul is such as to make a barrier against the entrance of grace : in other words if they are received by the impenitent.) These two Sacraments are therefore spoken of as conferring the 'first grace,' inasmuch as no further sacramental grace can be received by any soul which is not already in the 'state of grace.' The state of grace consists essentially in union with God through Jesus Christ and through the Church, and when we are in this state the other Sacraments are provided to enable us to enter more and more deeply into this sanctifying union. The life of grace is essentially the sacramental life.

Actual grace is best thought of as an act of God upon the soul, either immediate, as when the Holy Spirit presents a good thought to the

mind or spontaneously protects us in time of temptation, or (perhaps more often) mediated by a good example, good advice, a sermon, a prayer, a book, a picture, a Sacrament. While habitual grace normally flows along well-defined channels, actual graces know no boundaries of any kind. They are dispensed by God how and when He wills. It is only by the receiving of an actual grace that a man could ever be converted, or repent of mortal sin. The whole weight of Christian teaching would assert that no one could repent, or come to faith in Christ except by the inspiration of God, and therefore the very conditions which are necessary, if the first grace is to be received by any one who has come to years of discretion, can only be had by the special mercy of God, that is by actual grace. *Ex hypothesi* the unbaptized or the person guilty of mortal sin is not in a state of grace ; he therefore needs a special and individual outpouring of the love of God to enable him to attain the disposition of penitence which is necessary if he is to receive the first grace by Baptism or Absolution.

Further, the scholastic theologians recognized two kinds of actual grace : prevenient, which suggests the idea and wish to do what is good ; and co-operating, which gives the power to do it. Between the two is interposed the action of the human will.

All this sounds legalistic and formal to the last degree and no doubt the schoolmen did

tend to desiccate their theology. The extraordinary belief in the power of words to give an adequate expression to ideas, which governed the scholastic mind, was always putting them in danger of thinking that a formula can express the whole of a truth, however profound. But an artist, even though a genius, needs to study anatomy, and the scholastic subtleties are an attempt to get at the anatomy of religion. Sometimes the attempt is too ambitious and fails for that reason ; but the analytic methods of the ancient theologians are still a very valuable antidote for the sentimental impressionism which to-day sometimes passes for deep religious thought.

It is always necessary to remember that grace is God acting on the soul of man. It is not some kind of independent spiritual substance. We are often tempted to speak as though it were, but it is a temptation which must be resisted if we are to keep the true purity of the Pauline doctrine of grace. S. Thomas, the greatest of the schoolmen, speaks of grace as ' a certain effect of the gratuitous will of God,' as ' nothing else than a certain beginning of glory in ourselves,' as ' the expression or participation in the divine goodness,' as ' participation in the divine nature.' Or again, ' the effect of the divine love in us, which is taken away by sin, is grace.' [1] If we can keep

[1] I owe these references to Dr. H. J. Wotherspoon, *Religious Values in the Sacraments*, p. 129.

our thought about grace on this level, we shall find that the elaborations of later theology enrich and develop the original Pauline conception, and are very far from contradicting it.

Grace, if we may venture on a definition in modern language, is contact with the Ascended Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ, which are also the things of the Father, and shows them unto us. To be a member of the Church is, normally, to be living ' in the Holy Ghost,' and therefore, ' in Christ,' ' in Him that is true,' in ' fellowship with the Father.' This is the baptismal gift, brought to its fullness by the laying on of the bishop's hands, or some equivalent ceremony, in Confirmation. Once in the state of grace there is no reason why we should not remain in it for the rest of our lives. It is only the tragedy of mortal sin which necessitates the ' second plank ' of Absolution to restore us to the status which we have lost.

But the fact that we are in Christ does not mean that we are so merged in Him as to lose our separate personalities. Although He, by the power of the Spirit, is the very breath of our being, it remains true that He is one, and we are other. Just as God in Himself is both transcendent and immanent, so God Incarnate both indwells us, and visits us from without. When we say, ' Come, Holy Ghost,' it is our will to stir into flame that baptismal presence which is our constant possession, the interior

presence of the Godhead in our spirits by the Holy Spirit. When we say, 'Come to my heart, Lord Jesu,' we are begging for ourselves a gift from on high, a visitation of the same Godhead incarnate and enthroned. The supreme answer to that prayer is the self-communication of our Lord in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Here, then, are two contacts of God with the Christian soul which must be distinguished from each other. One is a constant inner flame, the other is food to be given from without and again and again renewed. Only the distinction between inner and outer, between continuous and renewed, must not be drawn too sharp. The object of food is to be eaten, and when eaten to be digested. We dare not speak of the grace of Communion with our Lord as though it were merely a temporary visitation. 'He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.'[1] When food is digested it ceases to be food and becomes part of ourselves. So when we have received the heavenly gifts they too cease to be what they were, a Presence of Christ distinguished from ourselves. The Spirit glowing in our spirits fastens on the holy Substance and builds it up into our human lives. There is assimilation: but, as S. Augustine teaches, the assimilation is not of the Food to the eater, but of the eater to the Food.

[1] S. John vi. 56.

CHAPTER XI

THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

WE have seen that eternal life does not mean either life that goes on for ever, or, exclusively, the life of the next world. But, in spite of that, Christianity is what has been called a ' yonside religion,' and it is true as ever it was that ' if in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable.' [1]

Yet the difficulties which beset us when we try to form some conception of the ' next world ' are formidable and various.

First, there is the haunting fear in so many minds that after all there may be no consciousness after death. When the candle has burnt to its end, there is nothing left to feed the flame. When the lute is broken, there is no more music from that lute. If this were mere materialism it would be comparatively easy to answer. The moment we begin to think philosophically it becomes plain that ' matter ' explains nothing, and that the world as we know it is a world whose existence depends on the knowing mind.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 19.

But those who are doubtful about a future life are by no means all materialists. They do not deny that the world (or at any rate all the qualities which make it worth while to call it a world) only exists for thought. But, they would say, we have no knowledge of any form of spirit which does not require a bodily organism. As far as our experience goes, when the brain cells are out of action consciousness ceases. How can we feel any confidence that when they are destroyed consciousness will continue?

To all this there seem to be two possible answers: one from the general standpoint of a Theist, the other from that of a Christian. First, then, if we believe in God, that belief implies that the primary fact is Spirit. The ultimate reality of the universe is not a hurly-burly of colliding atoms, but an Intelligence Who is also a Will and a Heart. The material universe depends on God and not God on the universe. It is probably not too much to say that the universe only exists as something thought, willed, and desired by God. If the universe could be blotted out, God would still exist. Therefore, so far from there being any inherent impossibility in the existence of mind and will and affection apart from a bodily organism, such existence is the very foundation fact of the universe. Moreover, religious experience, as far as it goes, is the experience of a certain harmony between the human soul and God. It is easy to say that we

have made God in our own likeness, but the delivery of the religious consciousness is something very different from this. The religious mind is conscious of kinship with the source of being ; and that implies, unless it is mere hallucination, that it is not ultimately dependent on that organism by means of which it carries on its existence in a material world. *Non omnis moriar* is the expectation of the unsophisticated mind.

So far it may well seem that we are moving in cloudy and uncertain regions ; but the whole problem takes on an entirely different colour when we have once assured ourselves of the evidence for the actual Resurrection of our Lord. An *a priori* argument for the possibility of the existence of mind apart from matter is cold comfort, however necessary it may be for minds bemused by scientific difficulties. The verdict of religious experience is naturally discounted by the sceptic in every one of us. But if there is reason to believe that the supreme Man, worthy, as we may all acknowledge, to be taken as the Representative of the human race, has actually made known His own survival of death, then the whole position is altered. We are dealing with facts, and not with speculations. No doubt we must test the evidence, and not believe it because we wish to ; but if the evidence is good, then our speculations come into their own, and the Resurrection comes to us not simply as an astonishing miracle, but as

the fulfilment of what we had hoped for yet hardly dared expect.

Moreover, the Resurrection goes a long way to meet the difficulties which arise from the fact that we have no experience of consciousness apart from a bodily organism. For although the Christian Faith certainly seems to imply that there are discarnate souls, it asserts as strongly as any one could wish that incarnation is the proper state of man, and that the discarnate condition is one of such incompleteness that bodiless souls hardly deserve the name of 'man' at all. But it claims, on the strength of the Resurrection of Christ, that there are bodies of a different order from anything of which we have had experience, and that such bodies really deserve the name of body more fully than our present organisms, inasmuch as they embody the true self more fully, and are far more completely under the control of the spirit. Whatever may be the puzzles and difficulties of the 'intermediate' state we may all be agreed that for full humanity embodiment is a necessity.

It does not seem to be the will of God to give us any very clear or certain revelation as to what happens immediately after death. The nature of eternal life in this world is fairly clear. We have seen that it consists in freedom, knowledge, and union with God. To some slight extent we have experience of these things in our own spiritual life, and so far as we have this experience we have an inexpugnable conviction

that they are more than transitory. To a greater extent we may observe them in the lives of God's specially chosen saints, who seem even in this life to have attained a life which is predominantly eternal. So also, in vivid picture language, our Lord and His immediate followers have drawn for us a picture of the consummated blessedness of the saints in the perfect life of heaven. This, no doubt, is largely metaphorical : it could not be otherwise ; but we are well assured that God has in store for us ultimately a life of bliss and glory. We can only picture it to ourselves as an endless duration of happy service and worship carried on face to face with the ravishing beauty of the 'vision of God.' But what this means we do not know, nor do we know to what extent, if any, we are right in thinking of heaven in terms of duration at all. It is possible, though inconceivable to us, that time may literally come to an end.

Still, as regards our ultimate destiny we have at least a picture which is symbolical of the truth, however inadequately it may express it. But of the discarnate state we can hardly even form a picture. When we try to think things out it is like standing on the mountain side near Andermatt and watching the St. Gotthard train toiling up through snow and ice to the level of the great tunnel. Half an hour later we may see the same train rolling down the slope on the Italian side easily and delightfully

into the sunny valleys of Ticino. But meanwhile it has passed through a time of darkness within the tunnel during which we know that every traveller was filled with longing for the beauty of a sunlit world. So we know something of that freedom, knowledge, and union which make up eternal life in this world, and we can conceive something of their final burgeoning into completeness in the heavenly glories of the Resurrection life ; but of that which comes between imagination can tell us nothing and faith very little.

The ordinary windows of the soul are closed. The life of service is interrupted. Nothing more can be done to win the approbation of God. Life has become passive. And in addition to the inevitable disabilities of the discarnate state, there is the hindrance and defilement of past sin to be dealt with. Not that the discarnate soul can sin any more, nor that we are at present dealing with the dreadful case of a soul that has left this world in a state of wilful impenitence ; but if there is such a thing as personal character it seems inconceivable that a soul which at the moment of death was imperfectly converted towards God should by the mere fact of dying attain to perfection. The instinctive feeling that the sinner ought to suffer seems to be well founded, though there is no need to paint the suffering in exaggerated colours. Between man and man pardon may be and should be granted readily, but it is right and just that an apology

should be offered for an injury. An apology is a light and easy thing compared to the pain of a punishment ; but it may be considered as the punishment of one who is sorry and therefore forgivable. And in the next world we may feel sure that the penitent soul—the soul, it may be, that has just learned what true penitence is—will be ready and anxious to make the apology of penitential pain, the only reparation in its power.

But it would be misleading to exaggerate either the pain or the darkness of the purgatorial state. Just as the train in our parable carries its own illumination with it into the darkness of the tunnel, so the saved soul carries with it into purgatory the blessed light of the knowledge of God in Christ. And as the train is still drawn through the darkness by the same motive power as haled it up the long slopes of the pass, so death does not mean that Christ has left us to ourselves. That aspect of eternal life which consists in free and willing service may well be in abeyance ; but we may believe that the gifts of knowledge and union are even enhanced. There is nothing, so far as we can see, in the mere discontinuance, or rather interruption, of bodily life which robs the soul of any spiritual knowledge it has gained; and the whole force of Christian faith is united in the conviction that union with the Risen Christ is the one thing which makes it possible for a man to enter the valley of the shadow of death with calmness and

confidence. The primary Christian conviction about the blessed dead is that they are still 'in Christ.'

Are we then to say that all saved souls remain in a purgatorial state until the final consummation which we call the Last Judgement? That would be to depart very far from the Christian tradition. It has always been the belief of the Church that there is no reason why any Christian soul should not have attained its own perfection even before death. Indeed there is every reason why it should. The puzzle is rather why we do not all do so! Such perfection would not mean that it had never sinned, but that at the time of death it had entirely conquered all propensity to sin. Such are the souls of those whom we call 'saints.' It is only too obvious that the majority of cases are very different from this; but it is the majority that is abnormal; the proper and ordinary result of Christianity is to produce saints. In view of their actual rarity we are accustomed, rightly enough, to assume the imperfection of those who die, and to assume therefore that there is an element of horror about death as a rule.

But occasionally it seems clear that the opposite is the case. There have been and are such people as saints, in the sense of those whose deaths are a luminously clear and triumphant passing from one perfection to another, and a sharing of the Passion and Resurrection of the Saviour. The Church on earth has al-

ways claimed to recognize some of these by her own gift of spiritual discernment, and has treated their day of death as the birthday into a new and higher life. About such deaths there is no horror and no sadness. They are 'with Christ, which is far better.'[1] It seems no more than the natural use of language to speak of them as being 'in heaven,' and although (with the exception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and some of the Old Testament saints) the Church has not usually thought of them as endowed with a bodily life, it is not perhaps an altogether illegitimate speculation to suppose they enjoy some anticipation at least of the full embodiment which is their final destiny. S. Paul in his earlier Epistles, while he was still expecting the immediate return of Christ, is content to speak of the dead as 'asleep';[2] but in 2 Corinthians v. 1–4 he seems to suggest at least some kind of embodiment as a necessary part of the blessedness of the Christian dead, while S. Matthew mentions the appearance of departed saints in their bodies after the Resurrection of our Lord.[3]

It is perhaps needless to say that no one dreams of confining the number of the blessed to those actually mentioned in the kalendars of the Church or to those who are commonly

[1] Phil. i. 23.

[2] 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xv. 18, 20, 51–54.

[3] S. Matt. xxvii. 53. This is at least an illustration of the beliefs of Jewish Christians in the Apostolic age.

spoken of as ' saint.' Where sanctity is obvious the Church recognizes it and encourages the faithful to pay honour where honour is clearly due ; but besides the canonized saints there is an innumerable multitude of others—whose very sanctity made them inconspicuous—known to God, but unrecognized on earth. It was no doubt in recognition of this that the Church was moved to institute the festival of All Saints.

The practice of asking for the prayers of the saints rests on this conviction that they are in the very near and special presence of our Lord. It is probably quite true that the cult of the saints has in the past owed something to the religious habits of the converts of the fourth and fifth centuries. They had been accustomed to invoke ' gods many and lords many,' and it was all too easy for the authorities to connive at their quietly putting the saints into something not unlike the position which the gods of the older kalendar had occupied. This may well be the explanation of whatever may be really superstitious in the cult of the saints. But it would be entirely untrue to pretend that this was the origin of the honour which the whole Catholic Church pays to the blessed or of the custom of seeking the aid of their prayers. The saints were already being honoured and prayed to when the barbarians swarmed into the Church. Expiring paganism could never have had the strength to introduce something entirely new into Christian practice. The practice was

there already, the half-Christian converts corrupted it.

The origin of it seems to have been twofold. There was the natural instinct of the unsophisticated mourner to ask that the beloved dead may remember him in the place of peace where he or she is resting. There are many inscriptions in the catacombs which bear witness to this feeling. They are of the simplest character: 'Mayest thou live in peace and pray for us.' That is a type, and it is repeated, with slight variations, again and again.

But from the time of the Revelation of S. John onwards Christian thought has always made a distinction between those who have already entered into a part of the joy of heaven and those who are still in the place of waiting.[1] And at first the principle of distinction was the rough and ready one of martyrdom. There is no better illustration of the honour—possibly even the rather extravagant and unbalanced honour—paid to the martyrs than is afforded by the privileged position of those who had come within measurable distance of martyrdom. It was found that such persons created one of the gravest disciplinary difficulties which the primitive Church had to meet. So great was their reputation that some of them, carried away by the sense of their own importance, interfered with the rightful jurisdiction of the bishops in the matter of excommunication and attempted

[1] Rev. vi. 9–11; xiv. 1–5; xv. 2; xx. 4–6.

to give sentences of absolution on their own authority. The word of a 'confessor'[1] carried such weight that it seemed as though what he loosed on earth must be loosed in heaven too. If this was the case with the confessors, it is not surprising that the honour paid to actual martyrs was such that it seemed all-important to secure their intercession before the throne of God. Many must have been the requests to them before their passion to remember before God those who still survived them upon earth, and it is at this point that prayer for the martyrs' intercessions begins. And to those who believed with a vivid faith that death, and especially the triumphant death of martyrdom, was more truly for a Christian to be called 'birth,' it was but a short and natural step to continue and even redouble such requests when Christ's athlete had won his crown and had entered into the joy of his Lord. The evidence is still to be seen in the rough scribbles of the pilgrims to the martyrs' tombs in Rome.[2]

But, as always happens, practice had outstripped theology, and when theology came to consider the custom of invoking the saints it had certain things to say. And first the question had to be asked, 'How do they hear us?' It

[1] The word has of course no connection with sacramental confession. It means one who has confessed Christ before men.

[2] See Barnes, *The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments*, p. 158.

must be confessed that this is the root difficulty of the whole matter. For the only answers that can be given are either that if they are indeed 'with Christ' then Christ will undoubtedly make known to them all that concerns them to know, or that if they enjoy the beatific vision of God, that includes the possibility of knowing anything that is knowable by a human mind. Neither of these answers would be satisfactory as *a priori* proofs of the possibility of communicating our wishes to the saints. They rest upon a practice already acknowledged and approved, and only profess to show how the knowledge of our prayers may be conveyed to the blessed. No one, therefore, is likely to be argued into believing that the saints ought to be invoked. But the Catholic mind will be favourably disposed towards a practice sanctified by so many centuries of devotion, and all that he will ask of theology is to suggest a rationale of it. The answer of the theologians comes to this: 'By all means continue to do as you have always done, so long as you do not imagine that the saints hear you and can help you by any right of their own. You must trust God to let them know your great longing for their prayers, and you may be sure that you will not trust Him in vain.'

But the application of theological thought to popular practice in this matter had two further effects, one of which tended to increase the field of invocation, the other to lessen it. On

the one hand it was soon seen to be impossible to limit invocation to actual martyrs. That limitation might have seemed reasonable in the days when eminent sanctity led naturally and almost inevitably to martyrdom, but when Christianity ceased to be a persecuted religion it was easy to see that a saint who had reached all imaginable perfection might die in his bed, and that it was impossible to suppose that the mere fact of non-martyrdom rendered such a one less acceptable to God or less accessible to knowledge of the needs of those on earth. On the other hand, the new evidence of the possibility of a Christian being a sinner which followed the semi-conversion of the Roman Empire made it inevitable that the distinction between the saints and the general body of the departed should be more and more emphasized, and as the common teaching about purgatory grew more terrifying it became less and less natural to ask the prayers of those who were thought to be undergoing experiences so dread.[1]

[1] S. Augustine is largely responsible for the extreme sharpness of the distinction drawn by the Western Church between the saints and the general body of the blessed dead, while it was to the appalling visions of S. Gregory that it owed that nightmare conception of Purgatory which has been so conspicuous a feature of the ordinary Roman Catholic teaching. But it ought to be generally known that the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is merely 'that there is a Purgatory and that the souls detained therein may be helped by the prayers of the faithful and especially by the most acceptable sacrifice of the Mass.'

Actual external religious homage was from the earliest times confined very strictly to the tombs of martyrs, and after the first few centuries even private invocation of any but recognized saints becomes rare in the Western Church, though indeed it was never forbidden.

There are few matters in which it is so necessary to remember the maxim *abusus non tollit usum*. When we see the rather degraded form of religion into which saint worship can decline, with its horrible images, and fulsome prayers, and doctrinal exaggerations, it is tempting to say that we will have nothing to do with it. But it is more consistent with the religious mind and the historical spirit to say that nothing could have taken so deep a hold on the Church which did not answer to some human need. It is a nobler thing to save than to destroy, and this maxim is as applicable to depraved doctrines as to sinful souls. However much may be truly said as to the inherent paganism of much that passes for Catholic practice in some parts of the world, it remains true that the existence of the saints is the one justification of Christianity itself. If that is so, human nature seems to demand that somehow or other the fact of their present existence should be brought home to us. The mere assertion of the communion of saints is unmoving and, to say the truth, obscure. But once let it be felt that the blessed and ourselves are matters of concern to each other, and a whole series of new psycholo-

gical forces is set going on the side of holiness. And who is prepared to say they are merely psychological? That would be to assert that the holiness of the saints is a spent force, and that it is a mere fancy to suppose that they can do anything now to help on the Christian cause: a useful fancy perhaps, but without any solid foundation. We cannot be content with that. While nobody need be urged to invoke the saints if he finds the practice repugnant to his spiritual perceptions, it is worth fighting to keep a place open for the practical recognition of the importance of the triumphant Church.

All that is here said applies with multiplied force to the honour and love which the Catholic Church pays to the Mother of our Lord. While on the one hand the superstition, sentimentality, and foolishness which have obsessed too many of her votaries outweigh even the similar accumulations which have obscured the genius of Christianity in the case of the other saints, yet the Church, it may safely be prophesied, will never dispense with the cultus of the Blessed Virgin. As co-operator in the Incarnation, as sole parent of our Lord, and therefore the very mould from which He drew His manhood, as educator of His early years, as supreme object of His human love, as Mother to the early Church in those days from the Ascension onwards when her relationship to the glorified Master must have surrounded her with something of the awe with which He was Himself

regarded—in all these ways, even before her death, she could not fail to draw to herself in a unique way all, and more than all, the veneration which we cannot but offer to those who are consecrated to God. Add to this the almost unanimous tradition of the Church as to her sinlessness, and even without any doctrine of Immaculate Conception we have a figure who seems to merit a devotion altogether beyond what we could pay to any other saint. The corruptions of this devotion are too painful to speak about, but at its best it has a wonderful contribution to make to those ideals of tenderness, purity, and chivalry which lie near the very core of the Christian character.

Something must be said about the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The difficulty between the Roman Church on the one hand and the Orthodox and ourselves on the other is twofold ; first, that when this view of a special privilege attaching to our Lady was first broached the general sense of theologians was opposed to it ; secondly, that it seems wrong to have raised what was at one time treated as a highly disputable opinion to the rank of a dogma of the faith. But it does not seem impossible to state the doctrine in such a way that the acceptance of it would be tolerable. We cannot believe that the Blessed Virgin was in a lower position of grace than that of the baptized child, and if we believe that she was predestined to be the Mother of God it seems as though

she must have had this position of being 'highly favoured' from the first moment of her life. It is far easier to think of God regarding her with favour from the beginning, for the sake of her Son, than to select some arbitrary moment at which He may be thought to have done so for the first time. To say this is not of course to approve the creation of a new article of faith, but merely to suggest the lines on which at some future date a means of reconciliation may be found.

We dare not omit the subject of hell. Perhaps it will be worth while to begin with a few corrections of the popular ideas of the teaching of the Church on this dreadful subject. The Church does not teach that either lack of Baptism or heresy lead to eternal condemnation. Individual teachers no doubt have taught this, and many other wild things ; but the Church has never been committed to it, and many of her most revered teachers have maintained the opposite. Nor is the Church committed to that 'mixture of buffoonery and savagery,' as Dr. Chandler calls it, which characterizes the ordinary mediaeval description of hell. Nor of course can we suppose that the picture language of the book of the Revelation of S. John is to be taken literally. To attempt to do this consistently all through that book would lead to very strange results indeed. As a matter of fact, however, one of the best commentaries on the true doc-

trine about hell is to be found in the Revelation itself. Suddenly, in the midst of all its extravagant language, as modern taste would describe it, we come across this most sane and sober, and most appalling sentence : 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. . . . Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.'[1] Hell and heaven are the fixation of moral tendencies, and the doctrine of hell means that it is possible for a man so to use his solemn gift of freedom as to contract out of the kingdom of heaven, to his own most bitter loss and sorrow. Whether any one has ever done so we do not know for certain, but our Lord's words seem to mean that there are such unhappy souls ; and although His words are plainly metaphorical, the metaphors have no meaning unless they express a very depth of bitter misery.

But while it seems to be true, and it is surely only too easy to believe, that a man may ruin himself irretrievably by choosing wickedness and refusing the love of God, when it is made known to him, we are certainly not meant to fill our minds with horrible visions of hell. Christianity is a Gospel, and its good news is that no one need condemn himself to hell ; that the Judge of all the earth will not send any there unless they have already chosen it themselves ; and that while it is true that God's will is to

[1] Rev. xxii. 11, 12.

save us through His Church, we must not presume to speak as if the ' uncovenanted mercies of God ' were somehow an exhibition of a lower degree of mercy than that which He displays towards the people of His awful choice.

CHAPTER XII

PRAYER

THERE are few things about which people are more puzzled than prayer. Partly the puzzles are intellectual. Does God care? How can He attend to so many things at once? Are not my affairs too small to bring before the Eternal? If something is good for me, will not God give it to me anyhow? If He has not given it to me, why should I assume that I know best? Is not prayer really asking for a miracle? How can my prayers affect some one else? Would it even be fair that any one should suffer through having no one to pray for him?

Partly, however, they are devotional. What is the good of my trying to pray? I simply cannot attend to what I am supposed to be doing. Or again, What is all this talk about progress in prayer? I have hardly ever missed my prayers: what more do you want?

It is hoped that the earlier chapters of this book may be of some assistance to those whose difficulties about prayer are in the main intellectual. The fact that it is the nature of God to reveal Himself ought to make it plain that He desires us to pay attention to His revelation,

and one important side of prayer simply consists in paying attention to God. The fact that He is a personal and living Father shows that He is interested in us individually. The doctrine of the indwelling Spirit gives dignity to the act of prayer, and shows that it is essentially an act of God within drawing us upward to a life of consecration. And the doctrine of the Church as the one Body of Christ goes at least some distance towards making it clear that 'if one member suffer all the members suffer with it.'[1]

This chapter will therefore deal rather with the devotional aspect of prayer. And indeed, if only we could get over our devotional difficulties the intellectual problems would affect us far less acutely. No one really expects to understand prayer. If we know that it changes and illuminates the whole of life for us, that is sufficient to establish its claim to be necessary to the fullness of our experience.

The importance of prayer is that it is the right disposition of the soul to God. For prayer, according to its best and widest definition, is nothing else than the lifting up of the heart to God. The uplifted heart is the heart in the right place. Nothing can take the place of prayer, for there is nothing of such importance as being rightly disposed towards God. What I am in my relation to God is what I am in reality, for God is the foundation of reality.

Clearly, then, the perfection of devotion

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 26.

would involve a life which was consciously and continuously consecrated to God. It will not be denied by any one who believes in a living God that the highest level of life will only be reached when we are always conscious that we are living in the presence of God, and are offering our lives to Him in sacrifice.

But we must walk before we can run. Moreover, as long as we live under conditions of change and successiveness spiritual apprehension must come in waves. There is a rhythm in spiritual things as in everything else that is alive. Therefore there must be special times when we set out to attend to prayer. If we like, we may think of such times as means to the attainment of perfect spirituality. But it is far better to remember that deliberate prayer is a thing which is supremely worth doing for its own sake. As a means it is an attempt to get into the habit of referring the life to God ; as an end in itself it is an effort to find the living God here and now, and to realize that He is the supreme object of the soul's desire. Formal prayer is the deliberate conscious attempt to put life into right relations with God.

Such prayer may be either vocal or mental.

Vocal prayer does not necessarily mean, as we might have expected, prayer which is said aloud, but prayer which consists in words addressed to God. Mental prayer, on the other hand, means prayer which consists in the direction of our thoughts to God. But the distinction

must not be drawn too fine. It is obvious that mere words without any direction of the heart to God would hardly deserve the name of prayer at all ; and on the other hand it is doubtful whether we can think at all without some use of language, even if it be only subconscious. All prayer, then, has its mental element, and almost all prayer has its vocal element. Further, even when this allowance has been made, it will be seen that these two main forms of prayer very often shade off into each other. Most people stop and think occasionally when they are ' saying their prayers ' ; and most people do deliberately make some use of words when they are ' making their meditation.' Thus S. Ignatius Loyola suggests that it is a good thing sometimes to pause over each important word in a prayer and dwell on it till we have, as it were, sucked the goodness out of it before proceeding to the next, or even so to time a prayer that one word is said to each respiration. It would be difficult to know whether such prayer should be classed as vocal or mental.

But, broadly speaking, we may define vocal prayer as speaking to God. Such prayer consists in definite words addressed to Him, though no doubt its value depends on the intensity of the attention, affection, and devotion which accompanies them. In mental prayer, on the other hand, words, so far as they are used at all, are merely preliminary : the real prayer

begins when people stop talking and merely exercise the powers of the soul. In vocal prayer the words are the prayer. In mental prayer the words are helps to the prayer. Thus, if we compare prayer to a picture that we hold up before God, we might say that in vocal prayer our words are the actual paint which we lay on the canvas—they are the picture ; but in mental prayer they are the artist's brush, a mere means to the production of the picture.

Little need be said in a book of this kind about vocal prayer. The most obvious form of it is the Divine Office, the Anglican form of which consists of Matins and Evensong.[1]

' Office ' in this sense means ' duty,' and the essence of this kind of vocal prayer is that it is a set form which is ordered to be used. It is only the clergy and the members of religious orders [2] who have to recite the office daily as a duty ; but the Church of England has deliberately shortened and popularized it so that it may be used by the laity as well. The ruling idea is the regular recitation of the Psalter, together with certain other lyrical treasures of the Church, leading up to a collect in which we express, with

[1] Two additional offices, Prime and Compline, were provided in the 1927–1928 Prayer Book.

[2] The religious orders recite the Divine Office in its ancient form, which is very much longer, and consists of seven ' Day Hours ' as well as the ' Night Office,' though the latter is often dispensed with by the Anglican Orders. In other parts of the Church all the clergy are obliged to recite the whole office.

that poignant terseness which belongs to that form of prayer, the desire of our souls for God. The Anglican form of the office has restored another very valuable part of the ancient ideal of the office by making it also a method by which all the more important parts of the Bible are read through again and again in regular course.

All the public services of the Church are also naturally expressed by vocal prayer, sometimes taking the form of collect, sometimes of litany, sometimes of eucharistic prayer.[1]

So also most people use a good deal of vocal prayer of one kind or another in their private devotions. We are all constituted very differently, and some pray more naturally in one way, some in another. But it is doubtful whether any one can afford to dispense altogether with that 'speaking to God' which constitutes vocal prayer. Only of course it must be remembered that dispositions are more important than words. After all we do not want to convey information to God. We talk to Him because it is only thus that we can express ourselves, but ultimately the object of the words we use is to help us to dispose ourselves rightly towards Him. Thus

[1] 'Eucharistic prayer' in this sense is not exclusively connected with the Holy Eucharist. It was one of the regular forms of prayer employed by the ancient Church for many purposes. Such prayer is always couched in the form familiar to us as *Sursum Corda* and Preface. Good modern instances will be found in the Order for Administration of Baptism and in the Ordinal in the Prayer Book of 1927–1928.

words of petition help men to relate their best and highest personal desires to God. Words of intercession do the same for their zeal and ambitions for other people. Words of thanksgiving and penitence suggest to them in God's presence the recollection of His gifts and of their misuse of them. Words of praise and adoration help them to realize God as He is and to empty themselves before Him.

Much has been taught and written by masters of the spiritual life on the best methods of mental prayer, and people often have to try more than one experiment before they arrive at the kind most suited to their own temperament, character, and stage of advancement.

Most people begin with meditation, which, as its name implies, is an exercise which involves a certain amount of intellectual pondering of the subject proposed, but it is important to notice that though it is quite true that it is with the intellect that the subject is first approached, that does not mean it is only the 'intellectual' who can be expected to meditate. What are called the 'considerations' at the beginning of a meditation should be of almost childlike simplicity. They are purely preliminary, and really amount to little more than recalling to mind what is already quite well known. The subject of meditation is usually a short passage from one of the Gospels, and the 'intellectual' consideration of it, if it deserves the word, is merely the making sure that we

understand it, and the recollection of who the chief characters in the incident are.

Next will come a personal application, after the manner of the simplest kind of sermon that can be imagined, coupled with a recollection that this application is a personal message of God speaking to the soul by means of the written word. Next—and this is the heart of the meditation—the affections come into play, by means of 'acts' of faith, hope, and love, of contrition, wonder, and adoration, and so forth. An 'act,' in mental prayer, is first a fervent address to God, generally to God as revealed in Jesus Christ, saying that we do, e.g., love Him.[1] So far the act is merely a vocal prayer. To make it a mental act the soul remains quiet after the act has been made in word and puts it into practice with the powers of the heart. In other words, having told God that we love Him, we proceed to concentrate on doing so then and there, as fervently and for as long a time as we are able. The final part of the meditation will look towards the future, and consist of a resolution to let the meditation have a practical

[1] All that is said here about the act of love applies equally to the many other acts which it is possible to make—faith, hope, contrition, wonder, self-abasement, joy, adoration, and countless others. Four or five such acts will usually be made in a meditation. But the act of love will never be omitted. It is the centre of the whole prayer. Indeed it would not be too much to say that the chief object of embarking on mental prayer of any kind is to make as good an act of love as possible.

result. The resolution may be either a firm resolve to please God better by fighting against some sin, or very often it is wiser to determine to do some one thing, as a token of having been in earnest about the meditation. There is no need to cast about wildly for a new resolution to make. Almost anything will do, unless it has been clearly indicated what it is that God desires of us.

That is really a very simple form of prayer, but when God calls souls to advance further, it is to still greater simplicity that He calls them. Thus it often happens, especially after many years of faithful and perhaps discouraging efforts to meditate, that people conceive a deep distaste for the intellectual pondering which is the distinctive feature of meditation properly so called. Of course this distaste may be mere sloth. On the other hand it may be that really there is no need for them to go on any longer reminding themselves why they should, e.g., love God. That much really is familiar to them by this time. Some may even perhaps be able to say very humbly that they do love Him, and what they seem to need in their prayer time is just to have opportunity and time to concentrate their whole soul on this and the other spiritual virtues and nothing else. No need for them to waste time thinking things out. That intellectual business was never more than a preparation for the due use of the affections. If it is no longer needed so much the better. In that case the

prayer, known in ascetic theology as 'affective' prayer, will consist simply in the love of God and other such affections. It will be seen that its simplicity is really its difficulty.

One form of affective prayer is the well-known method of S. Sulpice, in which we are advised first to contemplate Jesus as it were before our eyes, and occupy ourselves chiefly in acts of adoration; secondly, to remember His indwelling of our hearts, and give ourselves to acts of spiritual communion; thirdly, to think of Him as in our hands, waiting to strengthen them for service. It will be seen how firmly based is this method in the truths of Christian theology, the Divine Transcendence and Immanence, the Incarnation and the indwelling of our Lord. With this method it is, of course, possible, if we desire, to take some new aspect of our Lord as the starting-point of our prayer each day.

The final stage in the development of 'ordinary' or 'active' (as opposed to 'mystical' or 'passive') mental prayer is the state variously known as the 'prayer of simplicity,' 'acquired contemplation,' or the 'prayer of simple regard.' This is a still more complete simplification of the processes of the spirit, and seems to consist in one continuous, almost undifferentiated, loving gaze upon God in Christ. But it must not be supposed that it is a passive state. Passive contemplation is a condition of soul which is not under the control of the person

who experiences it. It is given when and as God wills, and nothing could be more disastrous than to attempt to induce it artificially. This 'acquired' contemplation with which we are dealing is best described as the deliberate action of the soul by which, without any open vision or semi-miraculous assistance, it holds itself poised before the veiled majesty of Christ, *toujours prêt*, in the Benedictine phrase. It is a kind of prayer which involves much spiritual strain, and, once more, its difficulty is proportioned to its simplicity. It need hardly be said that it should not be embarked on except in obedience to a competent spiritual guide.[1]

Further than this we need not go. There are chosen souls whom God will lead to far greater heights, but all the evidence we have goes to prove that He takes them under His own immediate control and keeps them simply passive in His hands. The experiences of the great contemplative saints, like S. Teresa and S. John of the Cross, are rare and abnormal, and are best studied in their own words. Such experiences are never self-chosen or self-induced, and are therefore in no sense a model for the prayers of ordinary people.

In all kinds of prayer the chief difficulty is that of controlling the attention. Failure in this is the reason why so many people give up prayer altogether, and why many others, too sensible

[1] For practical guidance in mental prayer see Father Wilfred Knox's *Meditation and Mental Prayer*.

to do that, are constantly in a state of depression about their prayers.

> My words go up, my thoughts remain below :
> Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

The very object of formal prayer is to attend to God, and yet inattention is the foe which dogs almost every one when he sets out to pray.

Now it is quite true that inattention does to a large extent spoil prayer, but it is an exaggeration to say that it renders it altogether useless. For, to begin with, the motive of setting out to pray was presumably a good one. That is something. The merit of a good intention is not lost unless the intention itself is deliberately withdrawn.

But there is more to say than that. It would be a depressing thing if prayer was only a sign that the person engaged in it was well-meaning! We cannot believe that God would really wish people to spend long periods dreaming away on their knees, merely in order to 'show willing.' We have to remind ourselves that Christian prayer is primarily God's activity, and only secondarily man's. It is not absolutely necessary that the whole process should be going on within the field of consciousness. Many of the deepest workings of God within the soul seem to belong to that region where we are unaware of what goes on, and are certainly unable to exercise any control.

The motive of prayer is threefold. It is an

act of homage to God, a means to our own sanctification, and a furthering of the kingdom of heaven. The English temperament is inclined to reverse the order, and in consequence to spend its spiritual energies chiefly in intercession, secondly in prayer for personal goodness, and only thirdly in adoration of the majesty of God. But it seems as though English people ought to learn in this matter to act against their natural grain. For God is the beginning and end of all things, and we cannot be right in giving Him any other place. It is He Who is the source of personal sanctification, and the surest way to arrive at that is to seek for God Himself first. Concentration on our own goodness makes for self-consciousness and even for a Pharisaic self-complacency. Concentration on God gives to our religion a healthy objectiveness and to our piety a simplicity and a lack of pose. As to intercession, great as it is, it can only be exercised with any effect by those who are 'good conductors.' There is hardly any limit to what a truly consecrated life can do for others in this way; but the consecration must come first and the intercession afterwards.

'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. . . . This is the first and great commandment.' We must put God first. The object of theology is to enable us to have an idea of God sufficiently concrete to enable us to give Him the first place in our lives, and theology only begins to attain its object when it begins to teach us to pray.

Pectus facit theologum is a somewhat overworked proverb. It might be truer to say that the heart is the test of the theologian. Christianity has been built upon dogma ever since the scene at Caesarea Philippi.[1] But the test of dogma is its power to draw out the love of God and man. *Joannes Theologus* is the Apostle of love.

[1] S. Matt. xvi. 13–20; S. Mark viii. 27–30; S. Luke ix. 18–21.

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